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WILLARD STRAIGHT

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Willard Dickerman Straight

WILLARD STRAIGHT

BY

HERBERT CROLY

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TO

W. D. S.

They write thee dead, and yet I know thou livest
In some new land,
Across the borderline of speech
And sight and touch of hand;
Yet where our thoughts can reach
And thou canst understand.

They know thee not who think that Death can claim
A spirit such as thine!
Born in the flame
Of creative desire,
Earth's steel and Heaven's fire,
Tempered to prove Life's worth through test
Of all the world deems best.

Valiant and true,
In thee men found a challenge to the good
That man can be or do.
Ready to dare, to build, and to obey.
On many roads thy way;
Strong, without fear,
And ever with a goal of high endeavor
Towards which thy soul yearned and drew near.

We cannot tell what purpose holds thee fast.
The gate through which thou passed
Forbids our following;
And yet, because of thee, it stands ajar,
And, from afar,
We catch fair glimpses of that land unknown,
Where Life, not Death, hath called thee to its own.

Eliza Morgan Swift

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INTRODUCTION

WILLARD DICKERMAN STRAIGHT was conspicuously a many-sided man. His career, in the sense of his voluntary and responsible contact with the world, began when in the late fall of 1901 at the age of twenty-one he sailed for China. From that time until he died in Paris on December 1st, 1918, he was eagerly welcoming new experiences and busily engaged in a great variety of affairs. Trained in college as an architect, he always remained keenly observant of the outside aspect of things, and particularly during his early residence in China, his pencil and his pen were both busy in reporting what he saw. He was impressionable, sensitive, alert, inquisitive, quick to the challenge of the occasion and the affair. Yet he was not by temperament an artist. He was first a man of action. He needed to act upon life before he was ready to report and re-interpret it.

His many interests expressed themselves in many occupations. Beginning as an official in the Chinese Customs Service, he resigned in 1904 to serve as correspondent during the Russo-Japanese War. At its end he entered the employment of the American government as Vice-Consul at Seoul, and during the next few years he served successively in Korea, in Washington, in Cuba and as Consul-General at Mukden. He resigned as an employee of the State Department in order ostensibly to go into business, but the business in which he engaged remained public. No well-wisher of the Chinese people could live for long in China without becoming interested in the development of her economic

resources. He was interested in a large way and in an essentially public and political relationship. Seeing that American policy in China was less selfish than that of other countries, he sought to induce American capital, as an agent of the American government, to invest in railroad construction. He labored for the next few years to overcome the grave political and business obstacles to this enterprise. When President Wilson deprived it of all immediate chance of success, he occupied himself with private and public experiments until the United States entered the war in April, 1917. During the last eighteen months of his life he was a soldier, but it is characteristic of his versatility that while a soldier he performed some of his best work in an essentially civilian capacity and that in the few weeks between the Armistice and his death he had returned to diplomacy. When he was overcome by illness, he was helping to plan the organization of the American delegation to the Peace Conference.

During the seventeen years of his active life, therefore, Willard Straight served successively as an employee of the Chinese government, a war correspondent, a member of the American consular service, a financial diplomat, a business man and a soldier. Yet the variety of his occupations was not the reflection of any essential discontinuity of purpose. He took his orders from the prompting of a lively and versatile imagination. He could never refrain from deserting the less for the greater adventure. His original intention of becoming an architect yielded quickly to the project of going to China and of opening up for himself a less routine career in the unexplored and beckoning East. He worked hard to qualify himself for his new job, but he was as little cut out for the humdrum life of a Chinese civil servant as he was for that of an architect. When he re-

signed his position to become a war correspondent, he was not deserting a chosen career. He was embarking his own life on the largest adventure within his reach.

In abandoning a year or two later the consular service in order to interest American capital in the development of China, he again gave up a safe, regular occupation and responded to the call of a doubtful but seductive enterprise. This new affair was the outstanding project of his life. It was the culmination of his seven years of exploration, of study, of experience and of experiment in China. It was the kind of enterprise which was bound to tempt a man who was by nature a pioneer. The development of China was no longer a matter of opening up ports and extending commerce. It had become a matter of building railroads, tapping natural resources, founding industries and of seeking those changes in Chinese political and social organization which would equip it to stand the strain of modern industrialism. Willard Straight saw this transformation coming and the concrete opportunities which would come with it. Only he saw it not merely as a business man would see it in terms of a profitable investment, but as a statesman would see it in terms of its effect on the lives of a people and in its relationship to the general political and economic movements of the world.

His ability to see it in its large human relationships was indicative of still another aspect of his versatility. I have characterized him as primarily a man of action. He was dissatisfied unless he was being carried along on the tide of some spacious event. But neither was he satisfied with behaving merely as the creature of the event. He was eagerly looking around, registering what he saw and inquiring about the destination and the route. Unlike the ordinary man of

action, his disposition was critical and reflective. He not only watched with discriminating vigilance what was going on, but he sedulously recorded his experiences for his own use. During many years of his life he transcribed the record in a diary. This diary is an illuminating fact. His keeping of it affords a clue to certain of his characteristics which otherwise would remain obscure, and it provides the material for an unusually faithful portrait of a man, the deeper continuity of whose life might otherwise have eluded detection.

Different motives may induce a man to keep a diary. The commonest is, perhaps, an irresistible and meticulous interest in one's own ideas, impressions and experiences. The consummate type of this kind of diary is, of course, Pepys; but the Confessions of Rousseau and the autobiography of Casanova belong to the same general class. A less common but more frequently published type is that of a Saint Simon or a Gideon Welles, who is participating in great events or is in a position to know how they happen and who sets down day by day the results of his observations. Without such diaries history in the modern sense could scarcely be written. They provide the historian with an indispensable check upon the partial falsification which infects public acts and records and against which only private records can protect him.

Willard Straight's diary belongs to neither of these classes. He did not participate in the making of great events nor watch from the inside other men in the manufacture of history. Neither was it a naïve or sublimated egotism which prompted him to pass many hours throughout many years in setting down what happened to him. His diary is on the whole objective. It begins as he sails for

China in the fall of 1901. When a boy of twenty-one starts a record of his life, he is usually providing an escape for the abounding energy of his own self-consciousness. But the young Willard was not particularly self-conscious. He was not at that moment troubled by doubts and queries, and he felt little need of feeding to himself the fruits of his own reflections. He was interested chiefly in people and in things. He set down events and happenings, impressions and observations, rather than precious thoughts and tortured feelings. He was not so much engaged in fingering his personality as he was fascinated by the panorama of life as it passed day by day before his eyes.

There were, however, passages in his diary of which the foregoing description is not true. He had moments of self-distrust, in which his habitual objectivity disappeared. During these periods he, after the manner of most diarists, allowed a self-conscious preoccupation with his own states of mind to trouble the running sketch of events and experiences. But these periods, important as they were in his personal history, never lasted for long, and he does not write his diary for the purpose of recording them. His tendency is to hurry away from them. He was uneasy as long as they lasted, and he always struggled to push out of them and to launch himself once more on the tide of some absorbing activity.

Later in his life when he was occupied with affairs of large importance, his diary ceases to be a record of experience and becomes not very much more than a note-book of personal dates and events. Yet during these years when it no longer reflects his major interests, a certain part of his correspondence enters and occupies the vacant place. He still felt the need of recording what was happening to him,

but he recorded it during the last years both for his own benefit and for that of another person. These letters possess as a vehicle of personal self-expression a value analogous to that of the early diary.

His deliberate preparation of this elaborate chronicle of personal experience sufficiently excuses the conversion of it into a biographical portrait. The publication of a permanent written memorial to a man who led such an interesting and diversified life and who was most valued and loved by the people who knew him best may not need any special justification, but in the case of Willard Straight the justification exists. A biographical portrait is the fitting vicarious fulfillment of his actual life. It need not be an haphazard fabric woven by the biographer with more or less success out of a fragmentary record of sayings and doings. It has the chance of being a moving picture in which the hero is both the actor and the photographer and to which the scribe would only supply the headings and the editing. Willard Straight wrote his own biography and sketched his own portrait as a part of the business of living it. His life was a significant experience put together and recorded with a purpose rather than a series of vaguely remembered and casually reported accidents. He expressed the experience not with an eye to publication but in order to keep his own soul moving. The expression was born with the experience. It still lives. I hope it may continue to live in the pages of this memoir.

WILLARD STRAIGHT

CHAPTER I

MOTHER AND SON

THERE is a rare and significant fact about Willard Straight's childhood which in addition to his subsequent habit of recording the incidents and experiences of his life gives peculiar propriety to the weaving of this raw material into a connected story and to a sketch of the outline and pattern of his personality. He was born at 1:40 p. m. on Saturday, January 31st, 1880, and starting almost from his birthday there runs parallel to his life a record of its progress. His biography begins practically at the same moment as his existence. His mother was an unusual woman—a teacher by profession and vocation who curiously enough believed in the necessity of understanding the human beings whom she wished to educate. As a mother she felt an imperative need of knowing her son. She watched his behavior with passionate concentration and wrote a running account of his development from the end of the first week until he was five years old.

The diary fills many pages, and I can reproduce only a small part of it here, but it throws an intense light upon the relation between mother and son and upon the natures of both of them. It is above all a truthful record. Emma Straight wished to know what her son was really like, and in studying him she does not spare either herself or the boy. Some of my readers may impute an unnatural want of feeling to a mother who methodically studied the behavior of her child, but if so, the imputation would not survive for

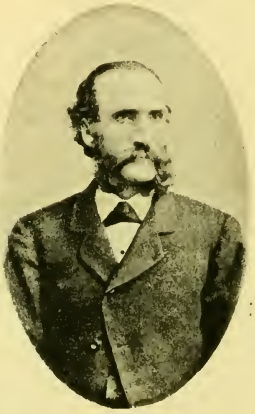
Emma Dickerman Straight

long a reading of the diary itself. It is an expression of devoted love no less than of a search for the truth; and it is as remarkable for its tender beauty as for its fidelity. It throws even more light upon the mother than it does upon the child. It reveals her as a spiritually creative woman. Willard's mother was able to bestow upon the life she created and recorded a meaning which made the record worth while.

Emma Dickerman came both on her father's and mother's side from pure English stock. Her father, Colonel Willard Arms Dickerman, of the 103rd Illinois Infantry, died in Boston on May 30th, 1864, from the effects of a wound received while in command of a brigade at Resaca, Georgia. Her mother's name was Margaret Elizabeth Deaver. On her father's side she was descended from Thomas Dickerman, who probably came to America from Bristol with the Reverend Richard Mather in 1636 and settled in Dorchester, and from Anthony Needham, who was one of the earliest settlers in Salem. She was born at Beardstown, Illinois, on January 29th, 1850. She attended a district school until her fifteenth year, when she entered the High School at Canton, Illinois. There she remained three years, teaching in the intermediate department of the school while completing the last year of her own course. But her career as a teacher had already begun at the age of fourteen as an assistant in the district school which she attended. Later she went East and earned enough money to carry her through the State Normal School in Oswego, New York, from which she was graduated in July, 1871. Thereafter she taught at normal schools in Nebraska and in Missouri until she married Henry H. Straight at Warrenburg, Missouri, in June 1873.

The pedigree of Henry H. Straight is not as definitely traceable as that of Emma Dickerman, but he comes from the same pure English stock. The first Straight arrived in America not long after the first Dickerman. He was born in Chautauqua County, New York, on July 20th, 1846. Being left an orphan while still a boy, he supported himself by working on farms. When sixteen he taught in his first school and, with the thirty-nine dollars received for the three

months' teaching, he entered the preparatory department at Oberlin College. He worked his way through college chiefly by teaching Latin and Greek classes in the preparatory school. He was so successful as a teacher of languages that he proposed at one time to specialize in philology and to study it in Germany. But subsequently, while principal of



Henry H. Straight

the public school at Galena, Ohio, he shifted his interest to natural science, and thereafter became a warm advocate of both pure and applied science as an indispensable element in individual and social education. He was principal of the Normal School at Peru, Nebraska at the time when Emma Dickerman entered it as a teacher. Later they accepted positions in the State Normal School at Warrenburg, Missouri, where they were married and where they worked together until the end of the school year in 1875.

Both Henry Straight and his wife took their professional work with high seriousness. Education meant to them something more than equipment for practical life, more even than technical or moral discipline. It was a means, a necessary means, of enlightening and unfolding human nature. They were always learners as well as teachers and they were always innovators as well as learners. In the early seventies of the nineteenth century American schools were still dominated by the churches and American education was still chiefly literary and biblical. A teacher who insisted on the importance of natural science and in particular of biology, as Mr. Straight did, was a daring pioneer. Feeling the responsibilities of a pioneer, he was sensitive to his own lack of adequate scientific training and he was continually searching for means of supplementing his equipment. Among other things he had corresponded with Professor Shailer of Harvard about the need of a summer school for teachers of natural science; and when the proposed school was finally started on Penikese Island, in the neighborhood of Martha's Vineyard, Mr. Straight and his wife during the first and second summers of their married life attended its classes.

The experiment did not last long. During the first summer it was directed by Alexander Agassiz who made up by his enthusiasm and his vast knowledge for its painful lack of equipment. But he died the following winter, and during the second summer the school was not of much benefit to its pupils. Mr. Straight did not, however, depend on it alone for the knowledge he craved. The school years of '75 and '76 were occupied in studying at Cornell and Harvard rather than in teaching, and it was not until September 1876, that he finally became an instructor in

natural science at Oswego Normal School in New York, from which Emma Straight had graduated. There they remained until 1883—throughout the years during which Willard and his sister Hazel were born.

Miss Margaret Morley, who knew them well, describes Mr. Straight as a tall, thin, square-shouldered man, with clean cut features and clear eyes crowned by a broad and high forehead. "His hair, reddish brown and curling slightly at the ends, was of that soft quality which denotes a sensitive temperament. He wore side-whiskers and a full mustache. His chin, clean shaven, was strong and square. In temperament he was calm, friendly, self-contained and cheerful."

The story of his life is that of one great absorbing enthusiasm—the enthusiasm of the teacher who is also the educational pioneer and who wishes to teach his pupils how to make of themselves better men and women. His original position in the Oswego Normal School was instructor in natural science, but some years later he added the work of director of the practice school, and in 1882, he began to give courses in the history and philosophy of education. "Captivated," Miss Morley says,"by the fundamental ideas promulgated by Pestalozzi, he devoted himself to the extension of the Pestalozzian method not only through all the public school grades, but through the high schools and even the universities. He saw the whole problem, while others were hammering away at details in the kindergartens and the lower and primary grades. He chose work in the Normal Schools, because it offered him the best opportunity of equipping and inspiring teachers to go and train the youth of the country in the new methods."

As he grew older he became more and more interested in

industrial education. He conceived it in a large way as the only education which could permeate the whole of a democratic society and as the most effective means of cultivating individual self-reliance in an essentially social medium. He was particularly interested in making laboratories and work-shops available for students so that the largest possible number of them could obtain the advantage of personal experiments with their own tools and diagrams. He conducted during the summer of 1883 a class in physical science and industrial education at the Martha's Vineyard Summer Institute, and the members of this class passed at the end of the summer a series of resolutions which clearly indicates the value of Henry Straight's work, and which affords a trustworthy expression of the way in which it was regarded by his pupils. They thanked him for showing them how to adapt instruction in the physical sciences to elementary education by means of simple and inexpensive apparatus which could be made by the teachers and pupils industrial processes through the making of the apparatus and of interesting the pupils in like processes through the apparatus which they themselves had made; for bringing out the resulting possibility of distinguishing and cultivating the natural bent of individual pupils. They dwelt particularly on the intellectual and moral power which in their opinion accrued to the pupils as the result of Mr. Straight's method of teaching science. It enabled them to meet successfully the problems of daily life. It awakened and cultivated the inventive faculty so that they might more readily adapt themselves to all possible environments. When they finished their course under Professor Straight they were "greatly encouraged to try to do better work, and de-

termined to assist him in developing and carrying out his broad and deep ideas of the unity of life and of the true educational process." This series of resolutions is surely a most honorable memorial to a single-minded and pure-hearted man. It was a high distinction to have inspired in his pupils this discriminating tribute of affectionate admiration.

His wife, Emma Dickerman, was more of an individual than Henry Straight and very different. He was possessed by one idea and in pursuing it was inclined to underestimate and to override the obstacles in his path. According to Miss Morley: "He lacked the gift of diplomacy, seeing but one thing and moving directly towards it. He unconsciously strove to absorb everything and everybody into his work; his enthusiasm laying him open to the accusation of being blind to the needs of other personalities." Emma Dickerman, on the other hand, "could never have moved heaven and earth for the winning of one idea. She saw a thousand possibilities instead of only one. Where outside his one great enthusiasm her husband was placid, she was vividly alive to everything.

"In appearance she was slightly below medium height, slender and full of energy. While not beautiful according to conventional standards, her face attracted attention. Strangers looked again and asked who she was. She was dark, with high cheek bones, a fine mouth with delicately chiseled lips, a straight nose with sensitive nostrils, heavy black hair that grew beautifully about a low wide brow, and eyes—how can one describe her eyes—very dark, somewhat deep set and glowing with the emotions of a soul never at rest. She had a keen sense of humor that leaped out from her eyes and exploded in a short, characteristic laugh. This

power to see the amusing side of life saved her both from what might otherwise have been a destructive emotional intensity, and from the bitter side of satire which her quick intellect made a tempting form of expression.

"Temperamentally she was an artist with no natural leaning toward scientific methods. She loved poetry, pictures, literature, beauty in all forms and above everything else people. She was by nature religious with a touch of mysticism. She possessed deep sentiment without being sentimental and had a passionate desire for social expression. She was the kind of woman to have created a salon. Her interest in people was not confined to her own pleasure in them. She was keenly alive to the needs of others and was forever extending a helping hand to those in any kind of trouble.

"While her husband was a comparatively simple person, she was extremely complex and contradictory. To her artistic and deeply emotional nature was joined unusual executive ability. To conceive was to execute. She drew the charts and diagrams for her husband's lectures and had them finished almost before he had done explaining what he wanted. They were beautifully made and strictly accurate. She was in perfect sympathy with her husband's aims and his work, but outside of that she had a great need of her own which she partly satisfied by books, music and the society of loved friends."

We are fortunate to have such a sympathetic and lucid delineation of her personality. It confirms the impression which we receive from her own writing. Her diary of Willard's childhood is, as I have said, something more than a record of the incidents of his early behavior. It is a touching and convincing narrative of the mother's own con-

tribution to the growing life of her child. It discloses how much she had to do with his peculiar mixture of impulsiveness, eagerness, versatility, sensitiveness and critical coolness. She herself, as Miss Morley testifies, was also impulsive, versatile, eager, sensitive and critical. She not only bequeathed to him a temperament of this kind, but she cultivated in him the disposition to greet life both eagerly and considerately.

Emma Straight wished and hoped to influence the life of her boy by means of understanding him. "Darling son," she writes when he was almost two years old, "I am so full of love for him and yet I am so helpless, so useless to him." Everyone who loves and who deeply desires to exert a positive influence on the life of the beloved is overcome at times by this sense of helplessness. It is in the very nature of life to go its own way. But just because every human being has a way of his own and may refuse the leaven of even a wise and loving solicitude, such solicitude will, in so far as it is wise, seek first of all patiently to understand and to cultivate understanding. That is what Emma Straight proposed to do for her son. The biography of his childhood, which she wrote with so much tender and tremulous insight, is an expression of the importance which she attached to understanding and the re-creation of him which she hoped to accomplish thereby.

I have said that to Henry Straight and his wife education was more than an equipment for practical life and more than a discipline, that it sought to render human beings enlightened and consummate. Emma Straight's biography of the childhood of her son was an essay in his and her own education. She hoped in the beginning to discover aptitudes in her son to which she could furnish opportunities of

expression. It did not quite work out that way. The exclamation of discouragement which I have just quoted may have been born of a sense of failure on her part to distinguish in Willard's personality specific gifts which she could seize and develop. But if she could not develop aptitudes, she could and did deliberately cultivate in him the beginnings of a moral personality, born of a balance between will and understanding. She encouraged him to act on every innocent and positive impulse and interest, but at the same time she made him feel that need of acting in a way that was considerate of herself and other people. She awakened him to a consciousness of the consequences of his own acts on the lives of his associates. Her early influence on him partly accounts for the variety of his positive interests, their impulsive vitality and their unusually considerate expression.

The whole diary is fascinating quite apart from one's personal interest either in mother or son, and it is difficult to resist the temptation not to quote it at great length. Writing in January 1881, when the baby was less than a year old, she says: "His growth morally quite amazes me. He does such cunning little things every day, showing distinctive knowledge of right and wrong. New Year's Day he pulled over a plant. We said: 'No, no, naughty,' but he reached up again and before we could prevent had broken off a twig and put it into his mouth. 'No, no,' said I, 'it is not for your mouth.' Very quickly he put it to his nose and sniffed, then held it up to us to smell. I cannot fully describe the action, but the meaning was evident. He wanted to make us understand that he plucked it to smell, because he put it into his mouth again and then shook his head 'no, no,' and put it to his nose again.

"The same day he fell down, but when I asked, 'What happened to the baby?' he fell again in the most comic tragic way, and on the repetition, 'How did Willie fall?' he fell once more. He so often comes to me sniffing eagerly and pulls my dress. Then I lift him up to smell the calla and he always teases for a leaf. When I give him a geranium leaf he always holds it to every one in the room, smelling all the time, thus trying to indicate what he wants each to do.

"This sharing of pleasure is most characteristic. He rolls his ball, then stops and looks for sympathetic smiles. He offers me everything he has to eat, his bit of bread or cake or apple. He wants me to notice his pleasure in his book. If I am reading he wants to read. If I look at pictures so must he. He is a darling soul, so loving and tender. When I was crying a few days since, he came to me, his dear little face all so tender and kissed me, patted my cheek and lay close up in my arms.

"I must put down my experience in government. When he used to go to the books and pull them down his papa and I slapped his hands. But Wednesday I found him at the shelf and said, 'No, no.' This rather amused him and he went on pulling them down. Another 'No, no,' and he put up his hand, so I saw that he knew he was to be punished and that slapping the hand would not do. I then looked very gravely at him, said, 'No, no,' and told him he was a naughty baby and that I did not love him and must go away from him. I went into the other room and began to dust the room. The poor little fellow came away from the books, sat on the floor and cried as if his heart would break, and even when I took him into my arms and cuddled him and he lay so close to me, the great tears still fell. When

I asked him to come to me he only cried more pitifully and so I had to take him myself. Dear child! I felt so sorry for the dear little soul's trouble, yet I knew it was right.

"Next day he went again to the books. I looked very grave, said, 'No, no' in a severe way, and he came to me, put his arm about my neck, kissed me tenderly and beseechingly. The lesson was learned. I pray he may never have cause to lose his trust in me."

March 20th, 1881. "He is building blocks now, can pile up six or seven quite nicely. The first example of constructiveness I noticed specially took place some time ago. He placed a napkin ring and a darner in some order (one on top of the other, I believe) after working quietly and solemnly. He then gave a sweet little birdlike exclamation at the feat. He could unlock the sewing-machine drawers a month, yes, six weeks ago. He has quite an idea of place. I am amused at his insistence that I put back a certain picture into its place or a kitchen utensil upon its nail, etc. Today he had a little broom which he played with a long time, then he took it back to its place, tried to set it up again as he found it. In this he did not succeed, so he took it away. He is quick to see how to do, impatient if he does not succeed. Then he throws away whatever he has been working upon."

Aug. 28th, 1881. "He was very fond of Mrs. Crane's little Kent, and Marie, the nurse, but thereon hangs a tale. I left him one afternoon with Marie and she put him to sleep, but not until he mourned grievously for me. After that he cried piteously if she came near him and she had to win his affections very gradually. But I wanted Marie to give him his dinner and he wanted me. I said, 'No, Marie will feed you.' Then he cried and came to me, as was his wont,

slipping his little hand into mine (to lead me to the table). 'Hand,' he said so dearly, 'Mama.' 'No,' said I, 'Marie.' Then a fresh cry. Then I talked to him, that my sweet baby was gone, that I must go away from the naughty crying baby if he didn't stop crying. Didn't he want to be sweet? 'Yes,' and the sobs ceased but began afresh whenever I refused the next pleading 'Hand, Mama.' Finally I succeeded in quelling his cries completely. He wanted to be sweet. Then I said, 'You are so hungry, can't you let Marie feed you?' 'No.' 'Shall I give the toast to Kent?' 'No,' with decided circumflex. 'Kent is good and sweet, he doesn't cry.' 'No,' doubtfully. Finally he climbed up into the chair, took the spoon from the dish and handed it to me. 'No,' said I, 'Marie.' He tried (having eaten one spoonful) to refill the spoon but he could not succeed. He then imitated Kent, putting the toast into the spoon, but he disliked the feeling of the wet bread and made the peculiar 'Kk' he makes when anything unclean touches him. Finally he with a deep sigh handed the spoon to Marie! It was over! I felt as if he had taken a citadel. That afternoon a little later Marie called him to have some delicacy. He took my hand to lead me, said 'Hand, Mama'; but I said, 'No, Marie' and it was all right."

Feb. 8th, 1882. "Baby's development has been steadily in the same directions as indicated before in this diary. The steps are somewhat hard to define. As to language, his vocabulary increases constantly by addition of all the words he hears. His fondness for his animal book has led him to the knowledge of most of the names of birds, beasts and fish. It is quite enough to tell him the names once. His great development has been in the direction of drawing. From the early winter when he began to draw upon the board,

or on pieces of paper, his aim has always been a decided one. 'I goin' to make donkey, etc.' But Sunday, January 29, he made eyes, tail and the outline of a head. Next Sunday, February 5th, he made legs and ears. That is to say, he says as he draws, 'I making eye, I making legs, etc.' Today he made a very cunning mouse, head, line of back, tail, eye and legs. To be sure, he made more than four legs but that's not strange. He still counts one—two—whole lot—as far as use of terms goes. He has very decided notions of what is naughty and what good, and I was amused to hear him name over the various naughty things he intended to do. Today he sang the notes of a tune perfectly, then stopped, apparently astonished at his own boldness. He has slept in his own bed since Alice went away and enjoys it very much, and sleeps more soundly. His disposition does not change but develops. His will is strong and sudden opposition makes him obstinate. He forgets nothing apparently, remembers about last summer at the seashore and little incidents and relations that I am positive have never been suggested to him since their occurrence. He now says a little prayer every night,—'Now I lay me.' But when he is tired he will not repeat it after me, only says 'yes'm' to each line. He adds: 'God bless papa,' and then goes on through the list of friends in a sweet and lovely way. He was much pleased to have a 'birthday' and as far as we can interpret his ideas the gifts he had seemed to be 'the birthday.' "

Feb. 12th, 1882. "A week ago tonight he was teasing for a drink of water and as he had already had more than enough I could not give him any, so Papa went upstairs and said very solemnly: 'John Locke is a very wise man and he says if babies have too much water it will give them the stomach ache, so I can't give you any.' Baby cried no more

but meekly said 'Hum' (Yes'm) and went to sleep without any other word.

"He recollected this the next day and when two days later he was quite feverish I again used the 'John Locke' argument, with great success, especially in the night. I was much surprised after his acquiescence in the J. L. decision to hear a sober little voice through the darkness: 'What John Locke say about Baby—so and so?' I said he would approve and let baby do as he suggested."

May 12th, 1882. "Having occasion to punish Baby for some naughtiness, after all other devices had failed, I shook him. He was very angry and called me 'naughty Mama,' but in a minute was sorrowful and kissed me and 'loved' me, as he calls the close caress he gives. Today his doll would not stand up so he shook her, his little face full of wrath. I wonder if I looked angry. I did not feel so when I punished him. He struck me very hard on the face, but as soon as I seemed hurt he was penitent, kissed my cheek, 'loved' me, said 'I am sorry, Baby didn't mean to.' Since then he likes to play at this same thing."

May 24th, 1882. "He has made such trouble getting out of his bath which he enjoys greatly, that I have been puzzled to know what to do. If I told him to get out he wouldn't. When I took him out myself he cried bitterly, wanted to get out himself. So a few days ago I slyly poured a little cold water in the tub, thereupon he 'scuttled' out in great haste. Two or three times since I've had recourse to the same means of 'eviction.' Today he began to whimper. 'But I want to get out myself.' 'Didn't you get out yourself?' 'No.' He seemed to see that the getting out was not of his own volition but induced by outside means."

June 17th, 1882. "Today he helped himself to sugar (has done so before) without asking permission. When he came in I asked him: 'Who told you you could have sugar?' 'Mama,' was the prompt reply. 'No,' I said, 'Not now.' I took away the sugar and his kitty as a punishment. Then when his wrath had subsided, I said, 'Who told you you could have sugar?' 'Mama.' 'When?' He thought a minute. 'When I was born.' 'But not now?' 'No,' said he."

Oct. 18th, 1882. "Willard has fits of crying which remind me often of myself. He is started by some little disappointment or a refusal to do as he wishes—some trivial cause which leads to long and bitter crying. I have watched him and am convinced that part of the paroxysm is nervous. Again the real cause of the cry may be quite removed from the apparent cause. For instance, he cried bitterly for some little thing for which he had been reproved. I watched him, then queried: 'Why are you crying? Is it because you think Mama doesn't love you?' 'Yes,' sobbed he, and he quite soon recovered his equanimity when I caressed and comforted him. Yet often this seems to augment the trouble. For he revels in the luxury of woe. The month of Kent's stay was most trying. He became nervous, irritable and restless. After the company had gone he rested, sleeping several days in succession for four hours a day. He loved and enjoyed Kent, but the constant company was too great a strain. He seems very susceptible to the 'atmosphere' of people, and so I think felt every mood of those about him. When I am sick or troubled, he is grieved to the heart, can't get over it, leaves his play to come and comfort me, caresses me, cries about me bitterly.

"He has been to the kindergarten this autumn, going when he wished. I have at last concluded it is too great a

nervous strain for him to be there all the morning, for he shows a certain overwrought state of nerves when noon time comes. Yet, as he is very social, I have felt it well to let him go to the school often. His devotion to his friends is beautifully shown by his treatment of Howard, a little playmate. Howard teases him, yet he never ceases in love and admiration."

Dec. 25th, 1882. "Willard's first exclamation when he saw his Christmas things on the chair where the stocking hung: 'O, see my soldier cap.' He put it on, then took his sword and trumpet. His inflections were very interesting, very complex and expressive,—tones sweet and manner dramatic. When he unfolded his little Kate Greenaway handkerchief, he exclaimed, 'O see my good hankwuf.' He spread it and cooed over it and recurred to it again and again. He unrolled the tiny bundles one by one as he found them in the stocking, and played with the little toys very sweetly. When he found the candy mouse, we said, 'What is it, Willard?' He looked at it slowly, turning it over and over. 'It has a red back and two eyes, it has two paws and a tail, and it's white here, it has two ears. It's a monkey.'

"When he found his books he insisted that one of them was for 'baby sister' and wouldn't hear of its being his. He took out baby sister's presents from her stocking with just as much pleasure in them as if they were his own, and put them down for her on his little chair. I could discover not the slightest trace of selfishness."

The personality of the child stands out clearly in these extracts from his mother's diary. He was impulsive, active and self-willed. He usually knew what he wanted and when he encountered resistance he fought hard and long to overcome it. His affectionate disposition rendered him

acutely sensitive to the effects of his own action on other people, particularly when the other person was someone whom he loved. It was his gift for affection, his rare ability to feel sensitively with and for others which prevented his headstrong impulses from expressing themselves in inconsiderate and even domineering ways. His mother divined what it was in her son on which she could depend to save him from the excess of his own impulsive self-assertiveness. She deliberately and successfully cultivated it. She used his affections in order to awaken his understanding, and his understanding once aroused insisted on occupying an important domain in the economy of his life. His disposition, when in need, to fall back on his understanding, the secondary but constant and irrepressible activity of his reflective intelligence, is traceable in part to her training. Her insight into him did something to kindle his insight into what was happening in the minds of other people.

The diary is not the only testimony to this effect. One of his mother's friends remembers a walk which she took with Emma and Willard Straight when the latter was some years older. They were gathering flowers and plants, a part of which the boy was asked to carry. His load became irksome to him and he insisted on being relieved of his burden. Finding him irritable and obstinate his mother said nothing but added his load to her own, an addition which manifestly imposed on her more than she ought to carry. The boy after watching his mother labor under her burden for some time finally could not stand it any longer. He broke down and asked her to let him have back his share of the load. Trivial as the incident is, it affords a perfect illustration of the method which Emma Straight used to temper the eager willfulness of her son and to cultivate his sympathetic

imagination. It was a method which she must have derived from her own and her husband's interest in the educational theories of Pestalozzi and which her own studies in psychology, which comprised as much and as little as was then considered to have scientific value, rendered her unusually capable of applying.

Another incident which occurred at about the same time illustrates how inexorable her discipline became under severe provocation and how ingenuously she adapted its burdens to the purpose of all such corrective measures, which is not punishment for the fault but moral enlightenment as to its consequences upon the lives of others. One day when he was between six and seven, the boy flew into her room in order to ask her for some money. She was not there, but her pocketbook was open on the bureau; and he succumbed to the temptation of taking a ten dollar bill. He at once collected the other children in the neighborhood, took them to a toy shop and bought each of them a handsome present. Then he treated them all to ice-cream and cake. When the feast was over and he returned home, he had only about two dollars and a half left out of the ten. In the meantime his mother had discovered the loss. She accused him of taking the money and he immediately confessed without showing much feeling of culpability. His attitude alarmed her, and she decided that it was necessary not to spare either him or herself in the attempt to impress on his mind the full scope and consequences of his guilt.

She demanded of him that he make amends in three ways. He must go to the parents of all the children and ask for the return of the presents on the ground that the gifts were the result of a mistake. He must then take the toys to the shopkeeper and ask for the return of the purchase money on the

same grounds. That part of the whole sum which he and his friends had consumed at the pastry shop he must earn by doing chores about the house for the large wage of five cents a day and so pay back his debt to her. The penalties were humiliating and he refused to go through with them. He was locked up in an empty attic until he was willing. Three days he passed in the attic before he would accom-

Willard Straight at the age of five

pany her to the parents of his friends and to the toy-dealer and utter the obnoxious confession; but on the morning of the fourth day he gave way and went through the penitential and healing ceremony. It took him almost two months of work to earn the money which he and his friends had consumed, but she did not relent until the compensation was as far as possible collected in full. Some of her friends criticized the penalty as being excessively severe to be im-

posed upon so young a child and for such an unpremeditated and generous a fault; and considering the extent to which she usually depended on his affections to moderate his impetuosity and willfulness, her discipline does seem somewhat ruthless. But its object was so clearly educational rather than merely penitential, and it was so carefully devised to awaken in his mind a consciousness of the consequences of his fault and the necessity of repairing the damage that the mother is entitled to the benefit of any doubt.

Unfortunately circumstances soon interfered with the carrying on by her of the education of her son. During the years in which she was bringing up Willard and writing her diary, an ominous shadow threatened the boy's future and hers. Her husband was afflicted with tuberculosis. When there was no longer any doubt about the diagnosis of his complaint, Henry Straight acted, according to Miss Morley, like a man with only a limited number of years to live, and he deliberately planned his life for those years so as to accomplish as much as he could of the work which he had cut out for himself. In the spring of 1883 he left Oswego and accepted an appointment as Vice-Principal in the Cook County Normal School at Normal Park, Illinois. He was moved apparently to make this change because the Cook County School had lately passed into the charge of Colonel D. W. Parker, who had won a national reputation by the enlightened ideas and the vivid enthusiasm which he had brought to his management of the public schools in Quincy, Mass. The Parker School was intended to embody all the innovations in educational methods in which the educational reformers of that time most devoutly believed. It was a precious opportunity for Mr. Straight, but he was not

privileged to work at his new post more than two years. In the fall of 1885 he was, like so many men before him, ordered South. Accompanied by his son, he passed the winter in Florida without any benefit, returning to Normal Park in April. Losing ground steadily he started off again a few weeks later for San Diego in California, whence he quickly moved on to Pasadena. Here his condition became so serious that he was joined by his wife and two children. He died on November 17th, 1886.

During the years in Oswego before Willard's birth, Emma Straight had taught literature and drawing at the Normal School, but beginning in 1880 she abandoned her professional work and devoted herself to bringing up first her son and then her son and daughter. The illness of her husband and the necessity of supporting her children forced her to resume teaching. Then, no less than now, teachers were paid meagre salaries. When Mr. Straight was ordered South in the fall of 1885, he and his wife had saved little money. Something had to be done. His wife did it by taking over his classes. They seem to have expected that he would resume them in the following year, and she acted as his substitute in order to keep the classes together and to maintain the continuity of his methods of instruction. Although she had never taught the natural sciences before, she managed to carry on his work acceptably, so much so that after her husband's death she was allowed to continue the work, no longer as the substitute for her husband but in her own proper right. But being only a woman and a woman with two children to support who was literally doing a man's work, her salary was naturally reduced from its former level of eighteen hundred to eleven hundred dollars a year.

Emma Straight returned to Normal Park, Illinois, during

Henry and Emma Straight with a group of friends at Normal Park, Ill.

the early winter of 1887 and resumed her teaching, not however for long. In the spring of that year she received a flattering invitation to go to Japan which she immediately accepted. It came from one of two Japanese students who were pupils of Emma Straight and her husband at the Oswego Normal School. One of them, Mr. Takamine, had become Superintendent of Schools in Tokyo. The position which he offered and she accepted was that of teacher of English in the Girls' Normal School in that city. Miss Morley states that she went to Japan "not as an ordinary teacher but in the position of one bringing Western knowledge for the first time to the women of Japan." She was invested with certain privileges not commonly granted to foreigners. Instead of having to live in the foreign reserva-

tion, she occupied a native house and was admitted to many functions which were ordinarily reserved for the Japanese alone.

There was, under the circumstances, something gallant and almost heroic in this expedition of Emma Straight to Japan. She was a person who, when left to shift for herself, would suffer from the timidity and the lack of self-confidence which handicap so many women of fine abilities. In 1886 the journey to Japan and life in that country must have looked like a formidable adventure to a widow who had to support and bring up two children. But apparently she did not hesitate. Like her son she took her orders from her imagination rather than her fears. Residence in a novel and aesthetically interesting country like Japan enabled her to appease certain cravings of her nature which were starved in Cook County, Illinois. She entered, consequently, on her new life with the utmost enthusiasm. Not only was she keenly interested in her exacting work, but with the curiosity of an open and susceptible mind, she took up the study of the art, the folklore and the language of Japan.

The assumption of these new responsibilities resulted, however, in the neglect of some of the old. Now that she was devoting so much time and energy to supporting herself and her children, she could not carry on their education with the same conscience. She could not preserve as nicely as she had during his early childhood the balance between her son's self-assertiveness and his consideration for others. Her own preoccupations and the conditions of their life in Japan were too much for her. The unruliness of Willard's behavior became a source of great anxiety. The Japanese custom of deferring to the man of the family, whatever his age, placed her eight-year-old boy in the eyes of the

Japanese above her in authority. It did not follow that Willard ordered his mother around, but it did follow that he could easily obtain assistance in evading his mother's rules. The servants obeyed him in preference to her, and owing to an advancing illness she lacked the physical vitality to cope with the situation.

"While living in the house on the university grounds," according to his sister, Hazel Sanborn, "the ingenuity of his pranks gave him a local reputation of no mean proportions. Mother was constantly interrupted in her work by a breathless courier announcing his presence in some absurd or forbidden place. His imagination flared out in countless bizarre expressions, with a sudden violence, a splendid novelty as surprising to himself as to others.

"His opposition to the conventional often sprang from some fine and altruistic cause. A strange dog, caught under a fence, and beaten by an irate gardner, provoked him to a frenzied attack on that official's person, and this method failing, he did not rest until he had aroused the whole household and many of the school officials by his outburst of rage.

"On another occasion, that of the celebration of the Mikado's birthday, we were returning home from the parade grounds where the Emperor had been reviewing the troops. The crowds were reckless with the day's license. One of the bridges over which they all had to pass had broken down under the heavy bullock carts in the morning, and the throngs were dense along the narrow streets. Our small family had to be divided, Willard in one jinriksha and Mother and I in another. Willard's kurmaya was half drunk and ugly in temper. Mother cautioned the boy to be extremely circumspect and have nothing to say, but Willard,

carried away with the dramatic possibilities of the situation, insisted on standing up and delivering a harangue containing the most picturesque Japanese street vocabulary. Mother, unable to control the situation, finally broke down and wept in helpless desperation, but the man for some inexplicable reason took his lesson quietly and behaved himself, thus scoring a triumph for Willard."

These two years in Japan exerted a profound impression upon a susceptible boy with a taste for adventure, an almost tempestuous disposition to have his own way and an avid interest in picturesque and startling surroundings. They stamped the Far East upon his mind as the place in which his abounding personal initiative and his deep-lying instinct for self-assertion would find a freer outlet for expression than they could have in his native country. The outside aspect of the Japanese world fascinated him. Although he was only a boy of eight, he began to sketch people and things which aroused his interest. He even took lessons in drawing from a Japanese master, and so was trained for a few months to see and to reproduce Japanese life in the Japanese manner. "It was an opportunity," his sister says, "to live out a tale from the fairy book, and he lived it to the full. Without doubt this period was potent in shaping his future, for through the excitements of his days there was unconsciously growing that appetite for the East, which, after lying dormant for thirteen years, finally brought him back again at the age of twenty-one to find again the old fascination."

But in the meantime their sojourn in Japan was coming to an end, and so, most pathetically, was the life of Emma Straight. In 1886 medical science was only beginning to understand how tuberculosis is transmitted. She had not

Willard Straight and his sister Hazel at the time of their early residence in Japan.

adopted any of the precautions which would protect her from contagion and she herself soon developed symptoms of consumption. In her case the disease ran a more rapid course. In less than two years, that is, early in the summer of 1889, she returned to America in the same vain search for health which had sent her husband South. Hoping to find some relief in the dry air of the Sierras, she passed the rest of the summer and the early autumn in the mountains.

When the cold weather came she sought lower altitudes. She dared to stop for a time near Sacramento and even to begin teaching again in order to supplement the slender resources which remained after her husband's long illness and her own. But the effort was fatal. After a short stay at Berkeley, she left her children with friends in San Francisco and in a last despairing attempt to save her life, went herself to Yuma, Arizona. There she died on March 28th, 1890, separated from her children, in a strange country and surrounded by strangers. Her body was brought to Pasadena and buried beside that of her husband.

There is little to add to the sympathetic and discerning portrait of her which I have already quoted from Miss Margaret Morley. Her moral temperament was firm, delicately modelled and both fragrant and radiant. She possessed deep convictions in the light of which she was able loyally to live, and it was this possession which carried her through the troubled vicissitudes of her later life. As she wrote to a friend in August 1888, "Here is the great secret. You can do what you think you can do. You can be full of courage by starting the courageous idea. You will attract courage in others if you have it yourself." The clearest revelation of the quality of her courage is the contribution which she made to Willard's moral growth. It was one thing for her to associate herself with her husband as a pioneer in education. It was another actually to act as a pioneer in the education of her son—to find an appropriate and effective expression for her educational initiative in her behavior as a mother. Believing that education meant the unfolding of human life through understanding, she started to understand and so to unfold the life of her son. She faltered finally in the attempt, but what she ac-

complished during the first five years was salutary. She succeeded better than she knew. Her faith and understanding created a leaven in him which, as we shall see, delivered him from many aberrations and perils, and which finally enabled him to translate the momentum of his impulsive life into a spiritual equivalent.

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD

ON the day when their mother died, Willard and Hazel Straight were either travelling to Oswego, New York, where she had decided they were to live, or else they were sojourning temporarily near Chicago en route for their ultimate destination. It must have been a forlorn little couple that descended from the train at Oswego to take up their home among people whom they could not recollect and with whom they could not claim any blood relationship. Mr. Hugh Nutting, a boyhood friend, reports that Willard, when he arrived in Oswego, did not "make much of an impression as a boy among boys. He was thin, pale and rather helpless so that one could not help feeling sorry for him. All the boys were impressed at that period by his lack of physical vigor, and the romantic circumstances of his return to Oswego."

Two friends of their mother's, Dr. Elvire Ranier and Miss Laura Newkirk, had agreed to adopt the children and to bring them up. Dr. Ranier, one of the earliest woman physicians in this country whom Willard came to call "Aunty Doc," was, according to Mr. Nutting, "a tall, strong, well-built and perhaps a trifle mannish type of woman with a kindly face and abrupt competent gestures. She was self-contained and good-humored, but there was something about her which made us boys feel under considerable restraint in her presence." She lived and had her office in the house of her friend, Miss Laura Newkirk, the

last of an old Oswego family. The two women were far from wealthy, but they had enough to live comfortably in a small town like Oswego, when living cost much less than it does now. Mr. Nutting remembers Miss Newkirk's bonnets. "They were ornamented with black jet of the variety which dangles and I well recall that when she walked down the church aisle on Sunday morning, convoying the two children to her pew, she presented a formidable aspect."

Emma Straight was responsible for the adoption of her children by Dr. Ranier and Miss Newkirk. The Doctor was a warm personal friend in whom Mrs. Straight had every confidence. She was above all dependable, and the dying woman in seeking to provide for the future welfare of her children naturally attached the utmost importance to the character of their guardians. The mother had particularly insisted, in spite of the difficulties in providing for it, upon keeping the children together. Their adoption by the two spinsters was a happy solution of a difficult problem. Willard and Hazel Straight lived under the same roof, but their elders divided responsibility for them. Miss Newkirk was supposed to take particular care of Hazel and Dr. Ranier of Willard.

The boy of ten, after his years of travel and his partial escape from control in Japan, did not easily adjust himself to his new surroundings. "The change from the variety of the East and the excitement of almost constant travel to a succession of quiet days in a small New York up-state town was," as his sister reports, "difficult and almost dangerous. Any school would be monotonous after the fascinating chapter of his previous life; any games dull after the wealth of opportunity he had had. It was in the eyes of his towns-

folk almost enough to brand him as a suspicious character that he had come from such remote foreign parts. . . . 'There go the children who came from China,' our new school-fellows would call out, doubling our wrath because they did not know the difference between China and Japan.

"In school he had no difficulty in proving his superior ability and having in addition plenty of time for mischief. Some schools would have found a way to use to better advantage the spare energy and intelligence which he wasted in elaborate attempts to relieve the tedium of the daily routine. But the Oswego primary schools were not intended to release an imaginative individual temperament, and when he broke away the only corrective used as a last resort was bodily punishment. This, to one of Willard's high spirit and sensitive feeling for justice, was not to be tolerated. Other boys took it because they dared not rebel. Willard knew no fear in publicly turning on his oppressors. He became known among his fellows as a champion of the lost causes of youth. A thrill of suppressed excitement and sympathy went through the schoolroom when, by the swift methods of a schoolboy's secret telegraph, it became known that Willard Straight was to be punished. Irritating in the extreme he doubtless was to those who did not understand the real cause for his insubordination, but vicious and dishonorable never. Not many realized that his conduct squared with his own standards nor did they see what was beneath these outbursts against authority. It was difficult for a boy whose outlets were so meagre in comparison to his needs to maintain any sort of balance in his living."

The contest with authority which Willard carried on at school had, unfortunately, its parallel at home. There was, for several years, something in the nature of a duel between

the boy and his adopted parent. "The education of Willard," says Miss Morley, "under 'Aunty Doc' had thrilling episodes. For the most part she conquered. She was right and Willard knew it. In proportion as he was forced to obey just laws, he came to respect and love the law-giver. But there were tragic scenes at first in which Willard's intense emotional nature, hurled against the granite of 'Aunty Doc's will, broke into uncontrollable tears. He would argue manfully, the tears running down his face, his hands clenched in rage at his own weakness, while he objurgated in parenthetical clauses between the sounding periods of the main argument. It can be believed that at such times the air about the two was tense. 'Aunty Doc' was magnificent, never yielding an inch, although she confessed that at such times she found it hard to keep her face straight."

This testimony from two eye-witnesses of the perturbations of Willard's boyhood reveals a sharp and significant transformation in the conditions and the purposes of his early training. His mother had sought to build up his personality by releasing and educating his impulses. She depended upon his deep affection for her, his lively sympathy for other people, her maternal influence over him and his own ultimate amenability for the sufficient enlightenment of his exuberant willfulness. She had through her own patient understanding of him strengthened his disposition to be considerate and his ability to understand. During their years in Japan her ill-health, her necessary preoccupation with teaching and the deference of the servants and others to a boy's whims had interfered with the balance in his education between positive expression and positive control. Circumstances had allowed Willard's eager and impetuous

impulses too many opportunities of satisfaction. If his mother had lived she might under happier conditions have restored the balance without doing any violence to his temperament, but that was not to be. At a time when he was suffering from superabundant willfulness, he found himself in and out of school subjected to a discipline which suppressed any infraction of arbitrary rules without attempting to understand the origin and motive of the disobedience.

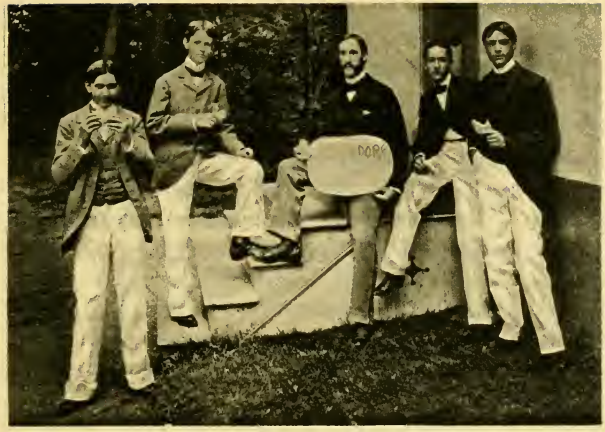
Dr. Ranier conceived education as primarily a matter of government. She issued just and inexorable edicts. The boy was to receive his education either from obeying these edicts or, if he refused, from being punished. No doubt Dr. Ranier's edicts were, as Miss Morley states, well considered. A willful, impetuous boy in his experimental contact with the world, more frequently than not, asserts his prowess in unruly and inadmissable ways. Sooner or later Willard would have to learn how far the world was from being a place which was prejudiced in favor of the satisfaction of his plans and desires. But it was hard on a sensitive and eager boy to fall from Japan and land in Oswego, to satisfy himself with a comparatively empty routine after a busy and entrancing vagrancy, and to accept life according to the edicts of a stiff elderly woman or a forbidding schoolmaster in place of the far horizons of his earlier boyhood.

Willard's misfortune was less that his adopted mother believed too much in government than that she believed too little in understanding. If she had been more disposed and better able to understand, she would, like his own mother, have cultivated his amenability and would have needed less government. By neglecting to understand, she had to increase the severity of her discipline. We should no doubt be careful not to exaggerate the effect of Dr. Ranier's severity

sketch by Willard Straight drawn when about sixteen years old

on their relations to each other and on the spirit of her adopted son. There was a deep and lasting affection between them. "Aunty Doc's" discipline was well-intended and in the case of an ordinary boy it might not have left a lasting scar. But Willard was a variable and sensitive plant. He flowered only when his will was taking orders from his imagination. His mother's early training had cultivated his imagination as the positive element in the unfolding of his personality. Dr. Ranier's discipline ignored his imagination and sought to toughen his will. She brought on a conflict between his impulses and his affections. He was too spirited to consent to repression and too affectionate not to be hurt by his own rebellion. She cultivated his chief infirmity, which was a tendency, when discouraged, to press or strain and, when opposed by his associates and friends, to suffer a loss of his self-confidence.

Willard's sister, Hazel Sanborn, who shared with him the discipline of Miss Newkirk's home and who knew him best during these days, places a similar interpretation upon the tribulations of his boyhood. "The child suffered," she says, "from the tragedy that took so much of his mother's strength. The bond between them was all the closer because of his mother's feeling that he was to be the inevitable



Willard Straight with three of his fellow students and one of the masters at the Bordentown Military Academy

expression of her love not only for him but for the beauty of the world. She must have known with some deep instinct that the fine restless spirit of her son was to find a more brilliant flowering than hers, in her more restricted life, could ever have. To understand him aright, one should have known her, her love of life and the cool courage with which she faced it." But she adds: "The lowering of the key in which he had lived was a necessary and a salutary measure," even if it did involve some temporary frustration and unhappiness. The two women who were bringing him up "did not consider, because they could not understand, the hunger for the color and diversity of a richly imaginative living that is in itself an aesthetic expression." Yet, "without the influence of their somewhat stern ideals, Willard might have had even greater difficulty in finding

himself. Their hopes were high for the future of their charges and their love unselfish."

It is doubtless true, as Mrs. Sanborn intimates, that after the practically unchecked self-assertion which circumstances had permitted to the Willard of eight and nine, the Willard of thirteen and fourteen was bound eventually to collide with an unsympathetic government of some kind; but it was peculiarly unfortunate that the government with which he collided was imposed by a person for whom he had a deep affection. For the collision disturbed the marriage between understanding and love and between imagination and impulse which his mother had brought about with so much solicitude; and it had the effect subsequently of rendering him too easily and too frequently disconcerted and jarred. As long as the projects of his imagination had a chance of being tried out, he abounded and flourished. He was not discouraged, no matter how formidable were the obstacles which an intractable world presented to the carrying out of his plans. What disconcerted him was the denial of a sufficient opportunity to launch his enterprises. Between his tenth and his fifteenth years, Dr. Ranier's government cultivated this weakness. He acquired as his sister says, "a habit of self-distrust that was hard to overcome and that sometimes appeared later in spite of the assurance he had gained." It tended to reappear whenever, as was sometimes necessarily the case, he himself could not act upon his darling projects and prove their value. Under such conditions he was likely to turn upon himself and attribute his temporary frustration to some disastrous personal defect.

In one respect his aunts adopted a sympathetic attitude towards his impulses. They encouraged him to continue his painting and drawing. "On Sunday afternoons,"

says his sister, " we repaired to the kitchen, cleared the table and prepared for work. Long tranquil hours, these were, of quiet chat and busy painting,—probably the most contented of the week. At the end of the afternoon, there was sometimes a joint masterpiece, pictures of Willard's illustrating a scenario written by me, though often he touched up the latter with a brisk pen inspired by Scott or Howard Pyle. In his stories 'a gentil knight' was always 'pricking on the plain,' but not for long at one gait, for adventures came thick and fast, four or five to a page and plentiful in gore.

"The close of a monotonous day was often enlivened by experiments in physics performed over the gas jet when he was going to bed. If anything proved of particular interest I was called in to witness it, as on the occasion when he discovered that the celluloid nail cleaner burnt with a delightful sputter and made a unique odor at the same time, or that the pin-cushion leaked a strange substance."

Willard's aptitude for drawing combined with his reputation as a mischief-maker were finally responsible for a really serious conflict between himself and the school officials. "He was continually," reports Mr. Hugh Nutting, "in hot water in the class-room over one thing and another, but the superintendent deplored particularly his practice of spending a great part of his study hour (if not detected) in drawing pictures. These were usually delineations of the superintendent and teachers which depicted very clearly the traits which the students did not like. He was repeatedly reprimanded and admonished for this offense and for others, but he was incorrigible. For while he learned easily and was able to dispose of his lessons quickly, his cleverness only left him so much more time to get into

Willard Straight in his cadet's uniform

trouble through infractions of the rules. He was continually writing notes, whispering, throwing spit balls, and the like, but the chief offense was the quick drawing of pictures which conveyed a meaning more sharply than a page of written matter. Willard, therefore, occupied a front seat right under the principal's nose. One day during a quiet period in the study hour something was thrown, a book perhaps. I do not know who threw the book, but I know it was not Willard. The principal did not know either, but he immediately accused Willard as the most likely person. Although Willard vehemently denied the charge, it was reiterated by the principal, who seized his birch and started in Willard's direction. Willard knew that he had not committed that particular offense and did not propose to be punished for it. The room was therefore electrified when he arose from his seat and informed the superintendent that 'he was to stay where he was.' We all understood that Willard was very angry. Of course, the principal could not obey such a prohibition and continued on his way toward his intended victim. Thereupon Willard in a frantic effort to defend himself, seized books, inkwells, rubbers,

pencils, etc., and threw them violently at the principal. He escaped the immediate chastisement, but brought on himself a still severer penalty. He was expelled from the school. In affairs of this kind the principal's word far outweighed the statement of any pupil."

As a consequence of this unpleasantness Willard's schooling in Oswego came to an end. His guardians decided to send him away from the town whose authorities and rules he had so frequently challenged. Believing him to be an essentially unruly boy they selected a "Military Academy" at Bordentown, New Jersey, which was strong on discipline and promised to develop in its pupils " a strong manly character." After elaborate preparations and impatient weeks of waiting, Willard passed his final examinations and became a cadet. The experiment was a brilliant success. The military academy corrected the apparently incorrigible youth. He became as far as the record shows a model pupil. The average of his marks both in his studies and for deportment during five quarters in 1896 and 1897, varied between 92 and 93 percent. The uniformly high marks which he received in his studies do not themselves indicate any reformation. His abilities were brilliant. Throughout his life when he participated in any competition which seemed to him worth while, he emerged somewhere near the head of the list. But for a boy who was

A book-plate which Willard Straight designed for one of his adopted aunts

supposed to be unruly and irregular his marks for deportment were astounding. He was 100 percent punctual during three terms out of five and during the other two never less than 96.

His guardians naturally regarded this result as a triumph for the method of the just law-giver. The military academy by its rigid insistence on discipline had brought out the manly and responsible traits in his character. But we have already seen with what scant respect Willard treated a discipline which tended to suppress rather than release his own positive impulses. "What really happened," as his sister points out, "was the finding of the proper ground for discipline in the joint acceptance of a common code by a group of human beings of his own age and interests. What he found, too, was the first real incentive for hard work, again a social one. To win a first lieutenancy became his absorbing ambition, a stronger one even than the working for a place on the board of the school paper. Almost all his boyish ambitions were of the same kind. The honors that came from the use of his talents he accepted more or less as a matter of course or as the means of gaining the thing that had a social significance. Thus he learned early the necessity of nice adjustment in the use of his abilities to gain not only personal distinction but access to those associations, successful participation in whose activities equipped him to become a vigorous and vital member of society."

In the foregoing passage Mrs. Sanborn helps us to understand her brother. He was inventive, ambitious and self-assertive. "His head," as she says, "was full of plans." She remembers "constantly living in the atmosphere of big business going forward, the launching of new enterprises, the excitement of some vast scheme about to startle the

astonished world." But ambitious though he was, his grandiose and seductive projects were not framed for his own aggrandizement, and they were not cherished in a spirit of stubborn or willful self-assertion. His disposition was keenly and intensely social, and his enterprises soon lost their magic appeal in an atmosphere of disapproval.

Owing perhaps to his success at the Bordentown Military Academy, he cherished for one moment the plan of becoming a soldier. He went so far as to enter the competitive examination which the Congressman from the Oswego district held for the purpose of designating an appointee to the freshman class at West Point. Willard stood third out of some twenty boys, and as there were two vacancies which the examinations were intended to fill, he had a narrow escape from a career for which he was wholly unsuited. A friend who accompanied him on his journey to Watertown where the examinations were held reports that the failure to qualify plunged Willard into the deepest gloom. But if so, he soon emerged. Instead of going to West Point, he adopted the much more sensible course of entering Cornell in the fall of 1897 as candidate for degree of Bachelor of Architecture.

His choice of the architectural school was doubtless due to his facility with the pencil. Architecture might well have appealed to a puritan aunt as an ingenious way of confining a youth who showed an aptitude for the dubious distractions of art to the straighter and narrower path of a profession. I doubt whether the young Willard ever seriously proposed to become an architect either in the sense of a professional man or in the sense of an artist. But the idea of living by his pencil may have momentarily attracted him, and if the advantages of an architectural career as a means

of avoiding the dangerous temptations of the artistic life were ever urged upon him he had, after his failure to attain to West Point, no alternative to propose. Architecture was, under the circumstances, as good as any of the usual excuses for going to college and better than most.

Willard's college course was an almost unequivocal suc-

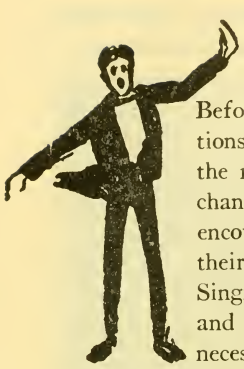
Willard Straight with a group of his fellow students at Cornell

cess. It was his first venture into the world on his own, and he carried it off almost without a flaw. The conditions were not easy. There was enough money left from his slender patrimony to pay for his tuition, but he had to earn as much as he needed for his lodging, board, clothes and general expenses; and this he did by working during the summer either in an architect's office or in a bank and during the college term by selling his drawings. He scrupulously lived up to all his responsibilities. Deprived though he was of the discipline by which his character was to have been formed at the military academy, he immediately demon-

strated how well he could get along without it. So far from being insubordinate and unruly, one of his contemporaries during his freshman year describes him as quiet, unobtrusive, obedient, clean-minded, reasonable and well-balanced. All this sounds a little priggish, but if so it sounds like something he was not. Willard entered college with the disposition chiefly to have a thoroughly good time, and he had it by taking part with the utmost vivacity and goodwill in the ordinary wholesome college activities.

A sketch of the late Prof. Morse Stephens by Willard Straight

He was extremely, yet unpretentiously, industrious and received high marks for his work. The School of Architecture was at that time by way of being reorganized by a new director, Professor A. B. Trowbridge. "Architecture, as an art," Professor Brauner states, "had been neglected." There was, for instance, no life class. Willard immediately placed himself at the head of a group of students who hired a model, and assembled to draw from life three evenings a week without getting any academic credit for the



work. He was the treasurer of the group and transacted all the business. In other respects also he showed his leadership. Before Dean Trowbridge's time the traditions of a grammar school had dominated the methods of the school. The new dean changed it into a kind of club or atelier. He encouraged the students to associate with their work a disposition to have a good time. Singing, good-natured raillery, horse-play and mild scrapping were permitted. The necessary discipline was confined to the students themselves, and it was enforced by a penalty known as "tanking" which Professor Brauner attributes to Willard. The school was equipped with two large tanks, about five feet square and two feet deep, for the stretching of large sheets of drawing paper. If a student infringed on any of the college rules, or if he violated any of the canons of good behavior, such as being overbearing, discourteous or superior in his behavior, he was tried by a jury of his peers, and if convicted was immediately heaved into the tank and thoroughly soused. But the executioners incurred certain hazards when they inflicted this pleasurable penalty upon an offender. If the culprit could pull the officers of the law into the water with him, he was fully entitled to this rich compensation.

Devoted as he was to his work, it formed only a small part of Willard's activities at college. He entered enthusiastically into all the varied social and other activities of which an American college is so fertile a mother. "All," is perhaps an

exaggeration, for Willard, while he loved games, was never conspicuous as an athlete; nor did he play games well. But athletics apart, he "made" all the teams, boards, societies and clubs which a socially aspiring young man could desire. Soon after his admission to the university he joined the Cornell chapter of the Delta Tau Delta fraternity, and as long as he remained in Ithaca, he lived at the chapter house. He straightway began to contribute sketches to the Widow, the students' comic periodical, and articles of various kinds to the Era, a more sober publication which was at that time issued every Saturday. He reaped his reward towards the end of his sophomore year, when he was elected to membership on the boards of both the Widow and the Cornell Era. About the same time he was selected as Art Editor of the Cornellian, which was published every year by the Junior Class. He supervised the pictorial side of this annual for the academic year 1899-1900 and contributed twenty-nine drawings of his own. In his fourth year he was Editor-in-Chief of the Era.

Meanwhile, he had been winning the recognition of his fellow students by being chosen for membership in two of the most desirable student clubs—the Savage Club and Aleph Samach. The Savage Club of Ithaca is a humble offspring of the Savage Club of London. It includes in its membership both town and gown, faculty and students. In order to

qualify a candidate must be able to sing, recite, play or do some other "stunt" of an entertaining nature. Its particular business is the entertainment of distinguished actors who are cast upon the shores of Ithaca by the vicissitudes of their work. Willard was a member of the Savage Club as a junior and its president as a senior. Aleph Samach is a small society, membership in which is conferred on a few students during their junior year. Admission to it is the reward of usefulness in some undergraduate enterprise, athletic or journalistic, and membership in it is one of the best evidences of undergraduate success. Finally his popularity among his fellow students resulted in his election to the Sphinx Head—one of the two societies which are made up of the most widely known and respected men of the senior class of each year.

During his editorship of the Widow, Willard and André Smith, a classmate in the architectural school, conceived and executed the "Little Johnny" series which had a great success in their day and were copied in many papers all over the country. The reader may judge of their character by one sample quoted from memory by Professor Brauner and illustrated, if not composed, by Willard. It ran something like this:

"Little Johnny hung his sister,
She was dead before they missed 'er.
Johnny's allus up to tricks,
Ain't he cute? He's only six."

These occupations and interests were those of an alert, companionable, versatile, high-spirited boy—one who liked to work, whose work was never allowed to interfere with an extremely good time and who was sensitively responsive to his social opportunities, but in whom college had not culti-

From his first sketch book. A page of early romance

vated an interest in things of the mind. But this was not all. Cornell did finally arouse intellectual aspiration in Willard through his admiration for one man. He formed a connection with one of the professors, which not only developed into a warm and enduring friendship but, which did something to shape Willard's mind and his future career.

The professor, Henry Morse Stephens, was an Englishman, a historian and the author of a book on the French Revolution, who had come to Cornell a few years before. His attainments and gifts could hardly fail to make a deep impression on ardent, sympathetic and imaginative young men. Both at Cornell and at the University of California whither he subsequently went, he was surrounded by a large group of admiring satellites, who glowed in the reflected brilliance of his radiant personality, and to whom he was guide, philosopher and friend. He was not a great man, but his mind and presence created a living illusion of greatness upon innocent, generous and accessible minds. He possessed an abundant and vivid personality which overflowed in a stream of talk upon all kinds of subjects and of all degrees of unconventionality and interest. It was above all voluminous and suggestive talk, which clothed an inexhaustible flow of ideas in lively phrases. Never before had Willard had an opportunity to graze in such rich pasture, and he took the fullest advantage of it. He soaked himself in the conversation of Morse Stephens and emerged with a purer interest in ideas than ever before and with a more liberated intellectual outlook.

It was characteristic of him that a man rather than a school or a cause first awakened his mind to the world of ideas in addition to a world of projects, impressions, ambitions and people. His power of idealizing other people, his

disposition to bestow and to welcome affection and his unusual accessibility to the impact of vivid personalities combined to make of him a hero-worshipper, but his hero in order to flourish must be a friend as well as a shining light. Morse Stephens was the first combination of star and friend who came into his life. A deep attachment sprang up between these two dissimilar men. Willard came to feel towards Morse Stephens something as he might feel towards a father. Morse Stephens came to feel towards Willard much as he might feel towards a son. Their mutual affection bridged the difference in years and temperaments and enabled them to become friends in spirit.

As a result of the friendship, Morse Stephens exercised a powerful influence on Willard's development and career. He sharpened Willard's native appetite for the picturesque in scenery and in personality. He reawakened his imagination to a side of life which the hurly-burly commonplaces and the practical preoccupations of his life at college had tended to obscure. One of Stephens's hobbies at that time was Rudyard Kipling, and his enthusiasm found a fertile soil in the mind of his disciple. Kipling's stories revived the young man's memories of the East and his instinctive interest in startling adventures undertaken by vivid and rugged people in outlandish places. It turned his mind towards the lands east of Suez as the place in which a man of his capabilities and temperament could gather the richest harvest from life.

One of his classmates describes the final impression made by Willard Straight upon his college contemporaries as that of an admirable companion, clean and whole-hearted in all his occupations and pleasures, and a salient, even a dashing personality. His life at college had brought out chiefly

his inveterate sociability, his gift for friendship and his eager versatility and industry. Yet his fellow students also seem to have thought of him as a promoter of grandiose projects which were not necessarily connected with his chosen profession of architecture. Something of the kind we may fairly infer from the sketch of the future of Willard Straight uttered by the class prophet on the day when the class of 1901 graduated. "After designing the marble palaces which will make Cornell a university after his own heart," this prophet declares, "Willard Dickerman Straight will build the most stupendous skyscraper in New York City, the home of the Twentieth Century, the first newspaper to be issued by the Harmsworth Journalism Trust Company. Straight will be appointed editor and artistic director of the new paper; and he will immediately cause the abolition of all the clothes lines which now disgrace the back verandas of the city's tenements." Surely a not wholly uninspired prophecy to come out of the mouth of a minor prophet. For wherever Willard Straight afterwards was, whether in China, in New York or on the battleline in France, he was drawing plans for marble palaces and stupendous skyscrapers; he was busily recording in the spirit of a born journalist the fate of his projects and the behavior of the world about him, and his projects were rarely divorced from some attempt to change for the better the lives of those people who dwell in unclean tenements.

CHAPTER III

FROM CORNELL TO NANKING

SOMETIME before the outbreak of the Boxer uprising, Mr. Edwin H. Conger, then American Minister to China, complained to Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector General of the Imperial Maritime Customs, of the lack of young Americans in the Service. It was a tradition of the Service that its employees should come from all the countries having business and political interests in China. In its senior grades there was a fair sprinkling of Americans, but when these older men retired there were no young men in the junior grades to take their place. Sir Robert assented to the truth of the criticism without admitting any fault on his own part. He had sought for young Americans, but he could not get them. While many had started, few would stick. They were not satisfied with the routine work and the slow promotion which the Service had to offer, and they had returned home in order to take advantage of the quicker opportunities for advancement and affluence which American business afforded. When Mr. Conger answered that he could find young Americans who would stick, he was allowed to appoint four. One of them came from Cornell, but for some reason he soon resigned. Soon thereafter Sir Robert received a letter from another Cornell student asking for an appointment to the vacancy. The spirit in which the request was made pleased the old man and he at once granted the application. The applicant was Willard Straight.

Thus it was not accident but intention which brought Willard back to the Far East. He deliberately seized the first opportunity within his reach to start his career in the Orient. There is no record of the motives which induced him to abandon the associations and the friendships which he had formed at Cornell in order to seek an unremunerative post in a remote land which might well have looked far from enticing to a sympathetic, companionable boy of twenty. But Morse Stephens may well have supplied the most influential motive. What evidence there is attributes the decision to the fascination which his memories of the Far East exercised upon his mind and which Morse Stephens and the cult of Kipling helped to revive. He himself was probably unconscious of the fascination. He talked to some friends on the way out to China as if it were a desire for a safe and sane career that was making of him a future customs inspector rather than an artist. But in saying this he was clearly talking to his audience, as a boy will. It was not the prospect of a secure berth which diverted him from the ordinary career of an American youth. In some not very definable way China appealed to his visual and his moral imagination as a world in which there were vast and entrancing vistas to be explored and in which an adventurous spirit without money or position might build marble palaces and shimmering skyscrapers.

At any rate he applied for the appointment and received it. In preparing for his journey he was helped by a Chinese graduate of Cornell, Alfred Sze, later Chinese Minister to the United States, with whom he formed a lasting friendship. Sze placed him in communication with Mr. and Mrs. Spinney, who were already employed by the Imperial Customs Service, who were then in America but who

were returning shortly to China. The Spinneys were going via Suez and proposed to pass some time in Paris and London en route. The delay suited Willard who still had preparations to carry on. They arranged to take the journey together, to meet at Genoa and to sail in a German steamer from that port. "I wish," said Mrs. Spinney, "I could make you see Willard as we saw him that sunny day in Genoa—our first sight of him—a handsome, sunny-faced American boy of the best type—good, kind, courteous, full of enthusiasm and the joy of living and far too genuine to affect an air of being bored, which so many boys imagine makes them appear manly."

Willard sailed from New York on November 5th, 1901. The diary which he continued to write for the rest of his life with some intermissions was started as soon as he had sailed. He begins with, "It is more or less useless to try and write of a trip across the Atlantic—a trip which has been so often taken and so frequently described—suffice it to say," and so on. He does not in the diary itself allow any self-conscious betrayal to leak out as to why he takes the trouble to record what was happening to him. Apparently he expected his life to be interesting and worth the bother of keeping a chronicle and he went ahead and kept it without dwelling upon his own motives.

Dec. 10th, 1901. "After a twenty mile race with the Australian mail, we dropped anchor in Aden about seven o'clock. For a long time the officer would not allow the traders, who had rowed out through a mile of heavy sea, to come aboard. The men stood up in the stern of their little crafts and cried their wares. Brown, half-naked negroes, kept the frail boats as stationary as possible, though, do the best they might, there was need for wonderful skill on the part of the tradesmen

to keep erect. One instant they were in the trough of the sea, the next they were on the crest of the ground swell and in an instant they were rushing downward to meet the next roller. The men carried baskets, leopard skin fans, necklaces, black buck and all kinds of curious horns. They chattered and yelled and screamed first at the passengers, then at their anxious rivals who were trying to push them out of competition. Matters soon became so complicated, however, and there was such immediate danger of collisions and upsets that the authorities finally consented to allow them to come on board. There was a rush and a scramble for the gangway and the anxious merchants filed one after the other up the side, carrying their goods with them. Then indeed, pandemonium was let loose. They waved horns, flaunted skins in your face, pushed cigarettes under your very nose, fanned you and illustrated the uses of their own particular teeth cleaners. Men with black wool, men with bleached wool and men with lime bleach plastered on their heads like a white skull cap, turbaned men, half-naked men, men in the discarded khaki of her Majesty's soldiers, in burnoose and jersey, thronged the deck. They yelled and chattered, shouted their wares, pushed their confrères about, yelled at their boatmen, and looked anxiously around to see what an 'honest man might steal.' Some of the more daring of the passengers ventured down to the lower decks to bargain, others with a certain regard for cleanliness stood on the gangway and haggled.

"The electric light glares down on the busy scene. Men in white, in evening dress, in flannels, skull-capped priests, long bearded missionaries and their frowsy wives, ladies from the first cabin, maids from the third, German stewards, Chinese, Singhalese, English, Americans, French, Africans,

Arabs, all bickering and bargaining; from the Cockney clerk to the English diplomat, from the seedy French priest to Alexander Agassiz. Meanwhile a black policeman resplendent in red fez and white jacket and breeches, puffs a cigar half as big as himself and twirls his club—the guardian angel of it all. The vendors squirm hither and thither, rush to the side and draw up baskets of fresh goods, soused by some playful wave. The boats at the side tumble and toss hither and thither, nosing into one another, slapped against the iron side of the steamer. Then a babel of tongues, a clatter of voices and above all the drone of the coolies as they strain their brown backs, slowly throwing in the sacks of coal. Half a mile away the lights of the Australian mail rise and fall. Then one by one the passengers retire, the tradespeople leave, the wails of the coolies cease, the tug squeals shrilly and the coal barges slide away. The great steamer whistle rumbles and there is a rattle as the anchor comes up. The everlasting throbbing commences at first slowly, softly, then with its regular thrum, thrum, thrum. The steamer slips out of the harbor. The sea-breeze catches us again, fresh and cool, and the twinkle of the lights dies one by one. There is the wash of waves, the glow of the stars: we're at sea once more."

Undated. "Long before we landed in Colombo, when the land was a jagged line on the horizon, we could smell the land. Dank and sweet, the sweaty breath of old Mother Earth, laden with the heavy perfume of her body. After an eight day stretch it was a welcome odor and we leaned on the rail, watching the shore line grow and breathing in great draughts of the fragrant air. It was dark when we reached the shore and piled into the bus, the ladies and Mr. Spinney inside, Krauss and myself on top. As we rattled

along through the city, the runner shouting ahead to clear the way, it seemed quite like Japan again. The whole 'partie' of the scene in the hotel, in fact the whole evening's experience ashore, savored strongly of the Kipling idea of life in the East. The brilliantly lighted hotel, with tall Englishwomen, some young and sweet, others older, quite evidently powdered, with hard lines in their faces; groups of men, evidently army officers, lounging about in great easy chairs or sauntering slowly up and down through the corridors; little brown servants in livery flitting here and there, carrying whiskey and sodas; in the distant quadrangle, a native band in khaki playing waltzes and soft dreamy songs. Then it began to rain and the great drops fell softly, eagerly drawn in by the baked earth; the wind rustled through the great, bare-legged palms; rickshaws that came rattling up to the hotel discharged their passengers; and the coolies drew them off under the trees and huddled in with the mass of little hooded carriages, whose lights were twinkling under the shelter of the trees. When I left for the steamer in a rickshaw, the rain had passed as noiselessly as it had come. The earth, its great thirst slaked by the shower, breathed fresh and fragrant and joyous, and the surf rolled in tumbling and curling as the great breakers chased one another far up on the beach, along the driveway. The eye of the lighthouse blinked fitfully as we rolled along and cast long shadows ahead of us as we passed beyond it into the half-deserted streets. There were only a few folk about; a group of half-naked loungers on an occasional corner, and here and there a couple of wandering Tommies with their pipes and little canes and now and then a terrier as a guard, I presume. When I reached the dock it was drizzling again, and a fair breeze was ruffling the harbor, waving the lights

A sketch of George Morrison, formerly the correspondent of the London Times in Peking, by Willard Straight

of the shipping gently to and fro. Climbing into a catamaran, I pulled my rain-coat about me and we were off, splashing through the choppy little waves, cutting ruthlessly into the dancing gold fields of light that streaked the harbor, passing sleeping lighters and small craft near the shore and the bustling steamers farther out, where electricity had turned night into day and the brown coolies were toiling

ceaselessly, loading and unloading. My boatmen were chanting as we slapped along, the heathen in the stern calling out and the two forward answering again. It was a wonderful ride.

"At Singapore, Dr. Morrison, the famous correspondent of the London Times, came on board. As luck would have it, he was an old friend of the Spinneys and I consequently met him and hope before long to know him fairly well. The second day out he lent me his 'boy' to sketch. A most interesting model he made, the more so as he had somewhat of a history, having like Dr. Morrison been through the trouble at Peking, but having been in a much more dangerous predicament. He belongs to an old Catholic family, their conversion dating back some two hundred and fifty years. During all the excitement in Peking, he was in hiding in a Boxer Temple, protected by the priest, a lamb in the lion's den, of a truth. He finally reached his master, however, and Dr. Morrison rewarded the priest and afterward saved him from the blackmailing of a missionary.

"Dr. Morrison himself is one of the most interesting figures in China at present. His features are very pleasant indeed, regular and clean-cut, eyes blue-gray and twinkling, and a strange, wondering smile playing about the corners of his mouth. His hair is never brushed, or at least if it is, never looks it. He has a happy faculty of getting acquainted with everyone, and what is more to the point, of finding out all about them without telling anything about himself in return. His questions are quick and very much to the point. He watches the speaker closely and when he is pumped dry of all information, the Doctor nods his head and smiles."

Willard Straight arrived at Nanking, his destination in China, on January 8th, 1902. He disembarked at six

o'clock on a cold morning in a somewhat discouraged state of mind, but being hospitably received by Mr. E. S. Howell, one of the local representatives of the Customs Service, he soon recovered his spirits. He was sent to Nanking not in order to take up any immediate work but to spend some months of preparation at the "college" which the Service maintained in that city. The "college" was situated some seven miles from the Customs House in a rambling Chinese building "all courtyards, draughty rooms and passages."

He remained in Nanking about six months occupied for the most part with the study of Chinese. He himself has supplied a description both of the way he lived and what it meant to learn so foreign a language.

"Little colony of juniors, juniors of the most unique service in the world, the students' mess of the Chinese Customs, holds forth in Nanking and studies and rides and swears as it jolly well pleases. The Commissioner of the Port is naturally the patron-saint or guardian angel or bugbear of the crowd, depending largely on the man, and to him the President of the Mess is responsible and to him alone. The quarters are seven miles from the village of Hsia Kwan and the River, in the heart of the Chinese City, and absolutely secluded from the eyes of all prying folk of foreign birth, for the missionaries, our nearest neighbors, seem always to be left out of the count. It's a unique life and under some circumstances ought to be a jolly one, depending of course on the make-up of the mess. At present there are two Britishers, two Frenchmen, an Austrian and an American, with a vague rumor of the probable arrival of a German and a Russian, and possibly a Japanese. Six white folk, (one doesn't think of the small distinction of nationality in China,) in an old Chinese residence, property of the

Willard Straight and five of his fellow-students at the Nanking school

Li estate. The life is absolutely different from the one the American college man leads, with his fraternity, his clubs and his university teams to support. Here the men are thrown on their own resources and, as a training in trying to make life pleasant for other people that they in turn may let you live in peace, it is most excellent.

"Social life there is none—absolutely none. An occasional dinner at the Commissioner's, tiffin now and then of a Sunday with some of the few foreigners at the Naval Col-

lege or the Military Academy, or most wonderful of all, a musical at a missionary's, are the only gaieties. After that it is merely a great barren sameness, a desert of Chinese character with tiffin and dinner and tea and an afternoon walk as the little green spots to make life bearable.

"Early in the morning the boy comes in with tea. Then there's a tub and breakfast, possibly a little walk and the teacher arrives. He is usually late. Half past eight is the appointed hour, but the wily Oriental doesn't approve of early rising and he is such an expert liar that he can always give a plausible excuse for his tardy appearance. He knocks at the door and shakes hands with himself as he enters, wreathed in smiles and bundled in his winter clothes. If the room is fairly warm, he sheds a coat or two and then seats himself at his morning's task.

"Were one to work eight hours a day at any ordinary

Four of the performers in a vaudeville entertainment at the school. Willard Straight on the right

and respectable language, one would at the end of six months show some remarkable progress. Not so with Chinese. Half a year is but the beginning, the point of the wedge that must be driven far before the student feels reasonably certain of his ground. But in the Chinese Customs Service, a thorough knowledge is required. All the men with any ambition work conscientiously at the characters and sounds that make up the Kuan Hua or official Clan tongue.

"A few of the luckier men, who have by unusual ability or a piece of good fortune been detailed to study, are every year sent to Nanking or Peking and there kept at a steady grind for anywhere from six months to a year. Though it is much easier than it was in the old days before the present handbooks and manuals had been compiled, the work is very hard and very confining. The whole idea of the language is so diametrically opposed to anything known in America and Europe that it takes a long while for the ordinary Caucasian to get a general idea of how to work.

"Not one of the teachers who take charge of the frightened assistants are able to speak English. They can count up to ten, some of them, and all say 'Yes' and 'All right' with a great deal of gusto. Now and then among the older men, one hears a startling outburst of profanity. Beyond that, however, they are helpless. Hence the lot of the beginner is no sinecure. He must not only master the intricacies of writing all the characters as he goes along, but he must figure out the construction of the sentences as well. Therein lies the rub. The poor chap has to take almost everything for granted. He learns his characters and can write them. If he's lucky he can pronounce them, but when it comes to stringing them together so they will make sense, he is lost.

He must memorize not only words and phrases but whole sentences by heart and by long usage and continual practice acquire the instinct for conversation, for there is no other way to learn to speak correctly. The Chinese themselves have to do the same thing. From the time they begin to read until they mount as high on the literary ladder as their intellects or purses will permit, they read and commit to memory the Classics. Instead of formulating rules of syntax, they have committed the language to memory. Certain forms are correct and no other may be used.

"The white man must run the same course and take up the yellow man's burden, but he is handicapped at the outset by ideas of grammar and a hundred other things which he must absolutely put aside. He is first put to work at the group of 219 characters which are used as the basis of the many others that make up the language. He has to commit these to memory. Then he must practise the tones. He must spend an hour or two a day going over and over a series of rising and falling, stretched out and clipped off, monosyllables, which the teacher drones out to be imitated as nearly as possible. Anyone dropping in at the Customs College, when the heat of the day had caused all the doors and windows to be thrown open, would think himself in an asylum for particularly violent lunatics, so

great is the hubbub and the barking of strange unearthly noises.

"The morning work drags on. The Chinaman sighs now and then when one says 'chan' for 'shan' or uses an even tone instead of a rising or a falling one. He smokes innumerable cigarettes at the expense of the student, and drinks great quantities of tea, or whiskey if the pupil is at all 'easy.' When his victim has gone far enough to be able after study to understand a little, he drops hints about 'Wh-usk' and 'Bwl-andy' and 'Champun' and 'Pep-mint.' He asks questions about your father and mother and sisters and brothers and if he can't make himself understood will go to the dictionary and point out the characters. Any photographs of pretty girls that one may happen to have about as mementos of bygone days, he will scan eagerly and inquire about their histories, past, present and future and ask which one of them is your wife. You in the meantime are learning Chinese, or trying to.

"With the afternoon another teacher comes, for each man has two instructors, 'Sien Sen' or 'Elder Brothers,' in order that he may not fall into any one mannerism of speech. The same succession of reading and writing is repeated. The teacher reads the lesson over and over again until the student's ear is thoroughly accustomed to the sound of the new character and has a hazy idea of the construction. Then the pupil reads and translates and writes hieroglyphics until five o'clock, when the day's official work is fin-

ished, though most men study by themselves for an hour or more each day. Thus it goes day in and day out, mastering new characters each day and dreaming of them at night,

Sketch by Willard Straight of a priest who is waiting for the Emperor

being swallowed by large bristling type and struggling in the embraces of the sentence.

"With the end of the season there is an examination in talking, reading, translating and writing, the results of which are sent to the Inspector General and play a part in the future career of the student. Then come the dis-

patches from the Inspectorate and the little body of students go, some this way and some that, distributed among the treaty ports that dot the coast and great rivers of China from Manchuria in the north to Tonkin in the tropics. The average student by this time knows about 1000 characters—quite enough for an ordinary conversation and can make himself understood. In the ports the assistants are expected to work continuously at the language, spending an hour or two a day with a teacher, reading and writing as before. It requires constant practice and regular and conscientious work. No one knows when an examination of more or less severity will be held."

The long hours and the drudgery of Willard's regular work did not affect his spirits or prevent him from seizing every opportunity for recreation, for companionship or for observation and fresh experience. He and his fellow students, when their day's work was over, rode in every direction over the country side and explored all its interesting nooks and corners, of which he wrote in his diary vivid and careful descriptions. They made frequent excursions to the spectacular ruins, some of which survived in the neighborhood. Willard himself knew everybody there was to know. He struck up quite a friendship with the British Consul, whom he describes "as a quiet chap" who "red-faced and almost blear-eyed sits and reads and reads and reads." This Consul was apparently a useful man in spite of his bibulous and sedentary habits. During the Boxer uprising he "stayed in Nanking, hobnobbed with the Viceroy, sipped his toddy, rode his China pony and damned the missionaries for making all the row." His hobnobbing with the Viceroy was salutary in one important respect. He induced Tin K'un Yi to ignore the Imperial decree to kill all foreigners,

which resulted in keeping the Yangtze region quiet and with it all southern China. So at all events he told Willard who believed him. The young student took a lively pleasure in the spectacle of this entertaining old soak who could do far more than the missionaries to prevent ruin and desolation, all because he and the Viceroy liked each other in their cups. Besides the Consul, he was intimate with customs officials and used frequently to spend his Sundays with them on the hulk in the River, where they made their home. Then his friends, the Spinneys, were not far away. Mr. Spinney was appointed as Commissioner to Chinkiang, the nearest port on the Yangtze to Nanking. He used to spend some of his holidays with them, and once Mrs. Spinney came down the River and passed a few days in the neighborhood of the college.

Late in February he writes to Dr. Ranier, "as for the life, I like it better all the time. It's full of interest and color and there is no end of chances for sketching, sketching, sketching." He took advantage of them to the limit. Most of his spare time was spent, notebook in hand, drawing the people and things which attracted his attention. One of the regular duties of his Chinese servant was to persuade Chinese models to sit for him. He made literally hundreds of these drawings of varying degrees of merit but all of them indicating close observation, a keen eye for the picturesque and adroit and able draftsmanship. It was the fascination which his surroundings exercised over his mind that chiefly prompted him to give so much time to sketching. As his descriptions no less than his drawings prove, he saw the interesting outside of Chinese life vividly, in great detail and at the same time with an alert sensitive feeling for the total effect. But he did not regard his sketching

Sketch of a Manchu woman by Willard Straight

merely as a recreation or a hobby. While he had never seriously proposed to become an architect, he did frequently consider the possibility of earning his living as an illustrator; and he was at that time supplementing his meagre salary by money earned with his pencil. During these first months at Nanking he drew many illustrations for a book of J. O. P. Bland's, "Verse and Worse." In this as in so many of his other activities there was a mixture of motives. He had such an active articulate interest in the men and things passing in panorama before him that in any event he would have sketched them and written about them, but his disposition was practical quite as much as sensitive and reflective. He was poor, ambitious and intensely desirous of recognition and success. He could not help considering whether, should he find life in the Customs Service too dull, he could not turn his experiences to account either as a writer or as an illustrator.

These varied and wholesome activities were never allowed to divert his mind from his chief purpose which was that of learning the Chinese language. Some months after his arrival in Nanking he reaped the fruits of his application and industry. Towards the end of June the several students in the "college" were examined as to their knowl-

A familiar temple figure

edge of Chinese. Judging by the result Willard had learned more than any of his fellow students. Out of a possible 900 marks, he received 858, about 95 per cent. The next student below received 780 marks which left Willard a wide margin of comparative excellence. Neither did his success in the examinations go unrecognized. Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector General, almost immediately ordered him to Peking, where in Willard's own words he would have "a better house, a better climate and, what's more to the point, better teachers." Thither he went early in July and with his removal to Peking he begins a new chapter in his life which was to last for two years.

CHAPTER IV

PEKING—1902-3-4

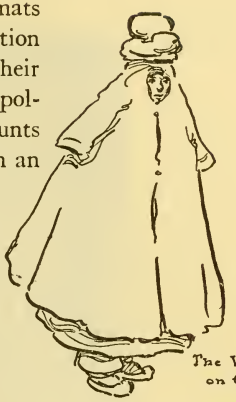
IN a letter to a college friend, Mr. Bascom Little, soon after his arrival in Peking, Willard Straight divulges his first impression of his new assignment. "Of course my transfer here was the best thing which could have happened to me. Peking is the Mecca of the Service and here I am after five months of study in Nanking, a great privilege in itself, under the eye of Sir Robert Hart, the great man, who holds our fortunes or our ruin in his own absolute power. So if I stay here a while and get on I'll know that I'm all right for all time. If I don't, I'll get out of the Service P. D. Q." He was, it is true, an unusually fortunate young man. The common lot of the recruit to the Service was an assignment to the custom house in some dull and distant treaty port there to remain until he improved his Chinese and acquired experience in the routine of his work. Instead of this dreary novitiate Willard found himself jumped immediately to headquarters and brought into intimate personal relationship with his chief. His superiors presented him with a much more interesting life and with every opportunity of quick promotion.

The Imperial Maritime Customs was the creation of one extremely able man and derived its character from its founder. Willard Straight described Sir Robert early in their acquaintance as "quaint, shy, powerful, despotic, silent, fond of children and petticoats and of doing unexpected things." He could handle "various sorts of indi-

viduals and was above all a tremendous worker." He had built the Service up from a small office in Shanghai into a powerful and far-reaching organization with thousands of employes and a varied and exacting group of functions. It was an administrative agency of the Chinese government for the collection of customs, the distribution of mail and the policing of the ports. Yet it was independent of Chinese control and its authority was lodged in one man and exercised by him. He was assisted by a general secretariat and by many chiefs of departments and bureaus of which the more important were the Postal Secretary, the Audit Secretary and the Chief Accountant. There was also a statistical department which issued frequent reports about the foreign trade of China and other matters connected with the work of the Service.

The personnel of the Chinese Customs was different from anything else of its kind. The men were chosen not from one nation alone, but from nearly all the countries of Europe, from the United States and from Japan as well. Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, Dutchmen, Italians, Russians, Austrians, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Portuguese, were all tumbled promiscuously together to collect revenue for the great Yellow Emperor. They messed together, worked together, played together, and, when the need came, stood by one another and fought together. Not only was the service cosmopolitan, but it was recruited from different classes in so-

A Courtier



ciety. There were sons of diplomats and consuls, the second generation of families that had represented their respective nations in Far Eastern politics. There were noblemen, counts and barons, and at one time even an Italian Prince. The Chinese government paid the recruits £100 as a travelling allowance, for which they signed a contract to remain in China for five years or in the case of resignation to refund this sum. On the expiration of the first seven years, home leave was granted for two years, the man receiving half-pay during that time. Returning once more to the East, five years' service was followed by another two years' leave. These successive periods of service and recreation continued until the employe died or resigned. A man on joining received about seven hundred and fifty dollars a year and the salaries varied from this amount to the eight to twelve thousand dollars received annually by the commissioners in order of their seniority. A superannuated employe was not entitled to a pension. Instead there was paid every seven years what is known as the retiring allowance, which amounted to a full year's salary at that time.

Such was the nature of the Service of whose headquarters staff Willard now be-

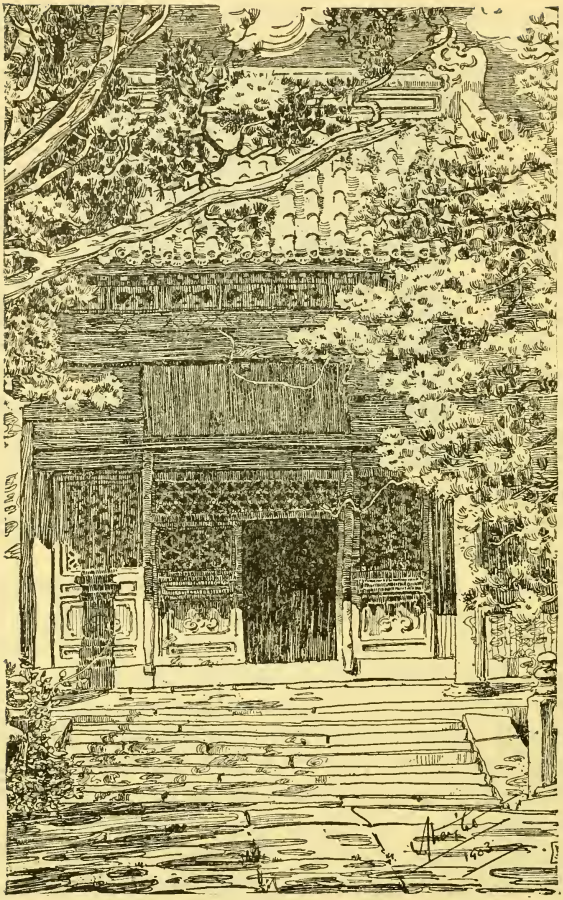
Sketch by Willard Straight of the head of a river coolie

came a member. A colleague in the Customs, Mr. Norman Shaw, characterizes the position which he assumed in Peking as that of private secretary to Sir Robert Hart. Technically his status was that of "student interpreter" but perhaps "personal aide" would more accurately describe his relationship with his chief. He seems to have had only occasional administrative duties. His absorbing work was to continue the study and practice of Chinese. In addition he was one of several young men who lived near Sir Robert Hart, ran

his errands, helped to entertain his guests and was initiated gradually into the mysteries of the Service. It was an easy and pleasant job, but neither very real, very absorbing nor very educative.

The foreign colony in Peking at the moment of Willard's arrival was still haunted by the ghost of the Boxer uprising. He wrote to Bascom Little after reaching his new post, "The Legation Quarter is a fortress to all intents and purposes. Every entrance is defended by flanking walls and the whole quarter surrounded by a high wall, loopholed and protected by a moat, with a wide glacis in front. It is policed by troops and the belated person leaving the club and making for his own abode is challenged by the sentry. All the governments have huge barracks. There are machine guns and field pieces in every compound and the next time John Chinaman makes trouble he'll have the Dogs of War about his ears in less time than it takes to write it. Such is the foreign quarter. Hardly anyone save the missionaries lives outside."

Mr. R. M. Collins, since connected with the Associated Press, whose newspaper work took him to Peking at that time, has supplied some interesting notes about the conditions under which Willard Straight lived during the two years in Peking. The Customs establishment, he says, "was on that side of the foreign quarter nearest the Forbidden City. Sir Robert Hart's residence and offices combined were a series of rambling one-story Chinese buildings partly Europeanised. The younger men of the Customs staff had similar premises adjoining. There were half a dozen in the junior mess, among them an accomplished and companionable Japanese, Kurosawa, a Russian, Kornaloff, a Hollander, Maas, and an Italian, Prince Rospigliosi. Life in that



Drawing by Willard Straight
of a Chinese temple

small international family needed as much tact as the ward room of a man-of-war. Dining out was one of the few forms of stereotyped social diversion possible in Peking, and the junior mess was expected by the I. G. to uphold the traditions of the Service.

"Straight at that time was the typical young American just from college. Cornell pictures, souvenirs and flags hung about his rooms. He treasured his fraternity pin, and his thoughts and talk were much of college life when he found a sympathetic and understanding American listener. Still there was more of the man than the boy in his face and manners. His features with age would have taken on what is known as the judicial cast, grave, dignified and distinguished. There was no other young man in the Peking of that time who so quickly became known and fell into such popularity. Thrown upon their own resources for amusement, as the few hundred foreigners were, rank and position counted comparatively little; personality was everything. A man who was interesting, who could contribute something to the talk, was welcomed everywhere. Straight very soon was at home at the dinner tables of the American and British legations and in a wider set. He was interested in everything Peking had to offer, in every phase of Chinese and foreign life, and he soon became a conspicuous item of the latter. He joined one of the summer excursion parties to the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs, he rode at the amateur races,

he played tennis, he danced, he acted in plays, he was the leader of the 'close harmony artists.' Some will remember an entertainment at the Club when Straight and 'Tom' Haskins of the American Consular students obliged with an original song and dance in burnt cork and negro

minstrel costume. The parody on a popular song done into local topical allusions was of his authorship, and the Spanish Minister, Senor de Carcera, nearly fell from his seat with joy at the refrain:

'Last night I dreamt I was the King of Spain.'

There were other lines dealing in a spirit of levity even with His Imperial Majesty Kwang H'su, the Emperor of China, and coupling the names of high mandarins with the extremely delicate matter of 'squeeze,' all of which was disassociated from the habitual posture of the Imperial Customs towards its Masters, and understood at the time to have given the Inspector General a shock rare in his experience.

"In the European legations, and of course the Japanese, was concentrated the tortuous campaign for the absorption of China, and for territorial and trade bases, and, the blessed word in the Orient, 'concessions.' The American colony stood apart from this diplomacy but held a position not less important because of its aloofness from the game of grab. Mr. Edwin H. Conger, best known as Major Conger, was the American Minister, remembered with affectionate respect by all Americans who knew him. He regarded the young men of the colony as his sons, and took a strong interest in Willard Straight as in others. Formerly a business man and a member of Congress from Iowa, not a professional diplomat, but with strong common sense and native shrewdness which is the pith of real diplomacy, Mr. Conger's sturdy and cheerful personality made for confidence. His power in those times was that he was honest and disinterested, as was the American government in its dealing with China, and the Chinese knew it. Therefore, high mandarins came from the yellow roofed palaces in their green chairs with many outriders, sometimes quietly to the side gates at night, for consultation and advice when the government was being crowded into a corner by the haulings and proddings of the predatory legations.

"The influence of the American legation owed much to the presence as Chinese Secretary of Dr. E. T. Williams, now of the University of California, whose understanding of the Chinese and sympathy with them made friendships as warm as the members of the American circle had for Dr. Williams. In John Coolidge of Boston and Henry Fletcher, recently under Secretary of State for President Harding, Mr. Conger had two able secretaries. Outside of the official set, on a pinnacle entirely his own, was Dr. Morrison, corre-

spondent of the Times, next to Sir Robert Hart the best known Briton in China. There were other interesting Americans, notably C. D. Jameson, an engineer, and Frederick McCormick, well known as a writer on the East. An artist also was McCormick. One American Christmas dinner was enlivened by a menu card, the joint work of Straight and McCormick, with a sort of heraldic bearing on either side taking the form of a portrait of Straight done by McCormick and a portrait of McCormick done by Straight, each unsparingly libellous of the other."

In some respects the new life in Peking suited Willard extremely well. He still abounded in unsatisfied curiosity about the China both of the past and of the present. Peking offered a much richer opportunity than Nanking to watch and to sketch Chinese life, its memorials and its surroundings, and of this opportunity he availed himself to the utmost. He wrote to Mr. Claude Bragdon at or about

Drawing of a Pekingese in winter clothes
by Willard Straight

this time: "I spend many of my afternoons wandering through the streets sketching and gossiping with the people, and on Sundays nose in and out among the temples and about the country which hereabouts is charming." Manifestly also Peking offered him a rare opportunity of seeing new people, starting useful connections, making friends and acquiring social experience. It had, of course, many of the limitations of a diplomatic society. It was narrow, self-centered, intensely personal and occupied with petty intrigues. But it enabled an obscure young man with his whole career ahead of him to meet unusual and interesting

people of all nationalities and to make himself personally and intimately known to them. "Now that I am in Peking," he writes to Bascom Little on July 13th, 1902, "I can show you a society the like of which you cannot find anywhere else in the world. It presents the anomaly of a diplomatic circle whose social life instead of centering about the local court revolves upon itself and depends entirely on itself for its by no means stinted amusement and gaiety." His diary reflects every phase of this cosmopolitan, pleasure-loving, intriguing, flirting, story-telling, apprehensive and entertaining society.

Aug. 30, 1902. "Dinner with Jameson and Coolidge, altogether one of the most enjoyable of my Peking experiences. Such tales of men one has heard about and read about from the lips of those who knew them. One sits and listens and drinks it all in, uneasy the while lest something should be lost and feeling dissatisfied that there is no possibility of playing the Boswell and setting all down in a series of notes that might be referred to at future need. Jameson is charming as a man of the world and as a raconteur. Coolidge has been everywhere, done everything, seen everybody—newspaper correspondents, authors, diplomatists, statesmen, all passed in review before my wondering ears. Yarns of Rockhill and of Savage Landor, tales of Pethwick, the private secretary of Li Hung Chang, of Yuan-Shi-Kai and his no-squeeze policy; Jameson on western China, Honan, Shensi, Shansi; Coolidge on W. K. Stevens or Vaughan Steever, the skull hunter and the dinner with the 'Tame Sultan of Lahore.' Such was the conversation, not to mention an inter-sprinkling of book-lore, how they both had discovered Kipling before the world rang with his praises."

One of the Literati

Sept. 14th, 1902. Pi Yun Su. "A description of the temple would be futile. A bewildering succession of courts, flower garnished, softly shaded, hall after hall of frowning demons and gentle Buddhas, with that great white jewel in its hillside setting, the towering pagoda, in the rear—all this beggars description. It is not so much the trees themselves, tall pines, a pleasing mantle of greenery hiding the weather-beaten gray of the seared trunks; it is not so much the quaint lattice and the humping, uneven pavement; nor is it the hills, massive, green and terraced in the rear. It is the peace which reigns over all and which mellows the combination of these beauties, the soft throbbing notes of the great bell within our own walls that echoes and answers calls from the other temples that dot the hillsides.

"The little old priest, soft-eyed, meek, low voiced, walks to and fro with bowed head and such a rare smile as he has—a smile that I would give all I had to be able to paint —a smile, benignant, kind to a degree, breathing self-denial, self-control, patience and the personification of the golden rule.

"In the evening I sat out on the step with the old priest, smoking and watching the moon half hidden by the clouds, that just gave enough light to sift through the dark leaves and throw a lace-like shadow on the pavement. The old fellow told me how, when the trouble began, the country folk had come to ask him what to do, how he had told them not to go, that it was written to live and let live and not to kill men. But they wouldn't listen to him and went to fight. He heard the guns as he sat in the court at night and played with his little kitten, and his heart was troubled, for many good men, both yellow and white, were losing their lives and many homes were destroyed and no good could

come of it. After the fighting was over his temple was rifled by brawling soldiery, looted and defiled by their foul presence. The crops went to waste, for there was no one

Sketch of a Chinese woman by Willard Straight

to till the fields, and corn and wheat and millet were taken for the foreigners, and the Emperor could give them nothing, as had been his wont, so that there was much suffering in the temple and not the plenty as in the old days. Then it was that his hair turned gray and his eyes were dimmed a little by much sorrow, and as he talked his little kitten rubbed against him and purred and jostled the rosary that he was incessantly shifting, murmuring an occasional prayer as he talked."

Sept. 30th, 1902. "Peking is a place of many dinners, not ordinary dinners that one eats daily with a clear conscience

and a good digestion, but formal dinners that are haunted by thoughts of having to repay the hospitality and made lurid by visions of liver and dyspepsia as one goes through dish after dish and absorbs wine after wine. There are diplomatic dinners where one legation tries to even off scores opened by various others. There are mess dinners given by officers of different legations and by the Customs assistants. There are home-like little gatherings in the American barracks, where the officers' wives have a few well selected people in for dinner and music afterwards. Then there are awful affairs given by misguided hostesses, where the guests are all mixed, where no one cares for his neighbor and where, when the meal is finished, everyone adjourns to the parlor and sits in a circle.

"The most interesting functions in Peking society are the dinners given once or twice a week by Sir Robert Hart. Here one sees a truly characteristic show, for it is absolutely international. There may be four ladies, there may be six, or when he has visitors, which he frequently does, there may even be eight. But there are men galore and men of all sorts and conditions. Ministers, Chargés d'Affaires, officers of the Legation Guards, Customs people, Consular officials, with an occasional engineer or a globe-trotter or two thrown into the whirl of officialdom.

"At the table everything is arranged according to rule, and a rule that is unbending and unbreakable. Sir Robert takes out the first lady. The senior Minister sits opposite to him with the second lady. Then to right and left people are arranged according to their respective positions in life, Secretaries of Legations, officers, with the juniors, generally a sub-lieutenant, a junior assistant in the Customs or a British Consular student, seated at the ends of the long table.

"There is a succession of well-cooked courses, and wine, from sherry with the soup through white wine and claret to the champagne. As this is served, the host raises his glass and all present must drink to him and to the ladies present, formally and in a most business-like, 'sorry-I-have-to-but-I-must' sort of way. As the guests leave the dining room, the 'tooth-picks,' as the men who come in to dance after dinner call themselves, come filing in. They form a relay to talk to the ladies as they drink their coffee, and by their presence give the other men a chance to steal away for an after-dinner smoke.

"The event of the evening occurs when Sir Robert takes the First Lady out for the lancers. Woe betide the Customs youngster who may be asked to dance vis-a-vis, if he doesn't know the figures. That is the one thing a man must know, how to dance the lancers, and no one ever saw them danced in just this way before. If there is a hitch, the old gentleman's smile turns to a hard scowl, and with a gesture of disgust he points out the proper direction, leaving the spirit of the poor unfortunate to wither within him.

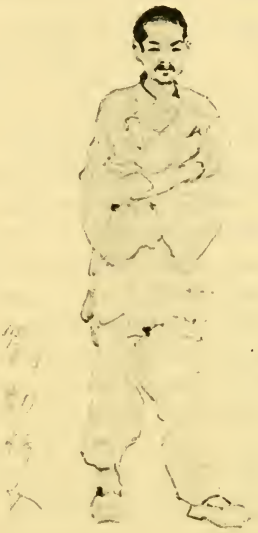
"When the program is finished, the orchestra with never a word pick up their instruments and disappear. No matter how much the guests may wish to dance, they cannot do so for that evening at least. Sir Robert is a man who loves regularity. As the music stops and the musicians scuffle away, the older men who have been smoking and gossiping in the billiard room—the Commander of the Italian Legation Guard, the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires, the French Military Attaché, pull themselves together and go out to find their wives or to make their bows. One by one the people file past and vanish through the door, out into the garden beyond. There is no last strain of music, as one goes

away, no yelling for carriages, no rattling of cabs on the pavement, no chattering of many voices as the people pass through a great door; nothing but the pat, pat, patting on the gravel path—an occasional laugh and finally, as one comes to the gate, the crying of the rickshaw coolies as they look for their fares, the weird noises that the drivers make as they chirrup to their mules, or the rattling, rumbling thunder as a heavy Peking cart goes thumping out of the courtyard to the street beyond."

Sketch of a Country Boy by Willard Straight

Oct. 4th, 1902. "Dinner with J. O. P. Bland and Dr. Marsh of Shanghai. In going over I felt like a sort of criminal, or the leader of a forlorn hope, to put it into a more pleasing guise. We went along the glacis between the rows of blinking lights, past the rickshaw stands where the coolies were cuddled up in the bottom of their vehicles rattling along over the dusty road to the bridge over the Imperial Canal. Here we were met by a man with a lantern, who guided us in behind the mat-sheds of the street kitchens, along the stone coping to the water gate. Standing on a stone far below us, surrounded on all sides by stinking water, was a man with a lantern, and stretching up, the connecting link between us, was a ladder,

gaunt, spindling, a most uninviting looking mode of descent. He with the lantern went down first, we followed, and the light brightened a bit of the stagnant liquid about us, slime covered, black, inhabited by myriads of water creatures. Then we stepped charily over a little causeway of stones in between the hewn bars of the water gate and through the archway beyond. Once out of the tunnel we had to scramble over rough ground, which the wily Oriental had used for all sorts of household purposes; up and down we went until we finally reached the dust padded roadway which we followed along to the alley where Dr. Morrison's house was located. The courtyards were gay with lanterns, which lighted the shrubbery and relieved them in silhouettes, or silvered their greenery.



A Chinese coolie by Willard Straight

"At dinner there was talk of the profession of Jezebel. My heart shrivelled within me as I heard tale after tale of the roguery of American officials in the East, of the bribery, of a consul and a group of missionaries, such things of Americans, of the great, the proud home of the Eagle, such rotten corruption by the representatives of one's own native land, was enough to make me wish for an absolute despotism that the stable might be cleaned.

"Then on to the German Consul-General in Shanghai, made famous or infamous by Stevenson in his 'Footnote to History.' I saw the glance of race hatred glint for a moment between Bland the Englishman and Wilzer the German. There were tales of loot and pillage, of the horrors of the siege, of the excesses of the Armies of Occupation. Bland was witty, sharp, keen, capable of following his point to the bitter end, and of searing in each sentence with an acidity that would make it felt,—Wilzer simple, a little dull, repeating threadbare arguments again and again, a dandy, a society man, helpless in the hands of the man of the world, who, every whit as suave, had a much broader knowledge of men and affairs. The combat between the sheep and the leopard it was."

Nov. 23rd, 1902. "A morning in the brisk autumn air. Brilliant sunlight, morning mist, tinkling donkey bells, clanging camel trains, rumbling carts and the cries of street hawkers. Shaw and myself went to the Llama Temple. The outer court was crowded with vehicles, the temple yards full of men in gala dress, yellows and reds throbbing in the sunlight. In one of the great halls some priests were at work on a map of heaven, all colors, funny little back-boned cone arrangements with which they sifted it on the chart. A crowd watched them, the light flooding in slanting rays through the door. Red and green and purple on beyond. In the foreground two skin-clad Mongols praying—a wonderful picture."

Dec. 4th, 1902. "More snow. Call at Congers, Welborn and Coolidge. Welborn dined here. Also a good day at Chinese. Am convinced that I am a damned fool. Self-analysis carried to an excess. And I doubt my own motives, see tommy-rot in everything I say, curse afterwards. I am so disgusted in fact that I want to see no one, yet I am perfectly sure that

if I stay by myself I shall be all the more unbearable in that I'll have more time to think myself over. In conversation I am coming to the point where I talk only of myself and am incapable of going ahead on generalities unless it be world policy or foolish philosophy or some such thing where I can air my own views again. Am not capable of keeping my mouth shut nor of controlling myself well. I *must* tell people things and follow the impulse of the moment. I am not hospitable when people come in. I know that they don't think I'm glad to see them—as Welborn, for example. Altogether I'm in a damned bad way and I don't know how to get out of it, save by healthy exercise and seeing lots of people and doing lots of things and that means the neglect of Chinese and of art, so what can a poor fool do?"

Dec. 6th, 1902. "Dinner with the Chancery Mess. Hynd and McCormick with the 'Padre,' one Mr. Norris, a Church of England clergyman who likes his cigar and his whiskey and soda, who sings and plays and is a tremendously good fellow. The whole evening has left the impression of camaraderie and manliness tinged with the color of the siege tales, for three of the men went through it all and McCormick came up shortly after the relief. Tales of Russians and Germans on the march, their weird singing, of trials of guilty Chinese officials by mixed courts composed of English, German and Italian officers. Yarns of the hospitality that ran rampant between the British officers in the Temple of Heaven and the Americans in the Temple of Agriculture. An evening out of Kipling."

Dec. 11th, 1902. "Calls at Conger and Jameson. Welborn in to dinner. The day: up at 7.00, drawing from 8-9, Chinese 9-4, ride 4-5, calls 5-6:30, French 6:30-8:00, Welborn 8-10, writing 10-11:30."

Jan. 11th, 1903. "After dinner Kornaloff took me in to see some bronzes, six pieces of excellent workmanship. One looked remarkably like McKinley. He told me of his trip to Mongolia where he saw a great fair with the living Buddha. This gentleman came to the great feast, mounted on a white pony, surrounded by yellow-robed Llamas and preceded by the great trumpets, three men carrying them, one man blowing. While the Mongol Princes and officials and High Priests were feasting with Mr. Buddha, little boys stripped to the waist came up and, after being sprinkled with holy water and blessed, mounted ponies. When they were too small their legs were tied under them and they raced for fifteen miles on well-trained ponies, seven and a half to go and as much to come back. All the little boys were good for was to beat the horses and make them go the faster. Then on their return the winner was presented with a silken prayer handkerchief which in Mongolia passes for money, and the House or Clan of the winner feel assured that fortune will be theirs during the months to come. Then he told how he had met a Mongol crawling to Wu Tai Shan. An old devotee he was, with leather trousers and apron and wooden clogs in his hands. With these he could reach out and then, bringing himself up, stretch out again like the measuring worm. He had seen Buddhist priests who had started out to collect money for a certain

cause,—seen them walking along with a nail in their noses, which they would sell, the nail not the noses, for a few taels. Other men stayed in little huts, lived there for years with a bell hanging in front of them. For so much they would ring the bell. Others sitting in a nail studded box would sell the nails for so much, the purchaser winning virtue by having taken away the nail from the poor creature's box and thus doing a kindness to him."

Jan. 21st, 1903. "Went to the rehearsal of a play in the Li Pu, Board of Rites. Children in flannels, red, blue and drab, striped as a tiger. Men and boys in bear-skins all carrying tiger-skin aprons, and wearing strange arrangements on their heads. Horsemen representing the eight banners or states, eight of them in the costume of the early Ching. Musicians in leopard-skins with wicker-work dust baskets. Tumblers in blue and red silk, dancers in purple flowered silk gowns, musicians with silver buttoned caps and long flowing robes, and in the great hall, white buttoned leopard-skin coated bards singing of the great story of the Rise of the Dynasty."

Jan. 22nd, 1903. "Saw the Devil Dance in the Llama Temple. There was first a very long service in the offertory, commencing with the men's chanting outside the door and finally entering. A number of Ta Llamas came down from Pei Kow and Tung Kou, dressed splendidly in sables and some sort of a black fur. The officiating Priest, the men told me, came from Thibet. He was a peculiar looking man, not at all like a Chinaman. All during the ceremony Mongols were praying on the flagging outside and Llamas with clubs drove the populace back. The service finished, the old man was escorted to the front courtyard and there

seated, the other men beside him in long rows, a mass of purple and yellow. There were drums and trumpets. The dance went on through all sorts of antics, commencing with the skeletons' performance and coming on to a person with a wonderful head dress, assisted by gentlemen with deers' horns and skulls and things, all shouting and tripping merrily about. After this was finished they all went into the long court and there a libation was sprinkled over the dusty stone pavement, after which the whole procession took a run around the block."

Jan. 29th, 1903. "My mother's birthday. Painted Welborn in the morning. Tiffined with Derry and went to the theatre with his party. Obliged to leave by the unfortunate early closing. We tried a Pai Tzu ride to the Tung Pien Men and back again and then had tea with the day's host, calling on the Congers afterwards. I've been uncomfortable all day, stomach-achey or something due to over-eating or indigestion. For some reason or other, I have deteriorated morally in a most regrettable sort of way. The old strenuousness is gone and I am drifting, drifting and not calling myself back, doing a hundred little things each day, consoling myself that other people do them, knowing that they are harmless in themselves yet keeping on when I realize that doing so is bad. Dreaming always. Always in a play-acting mood. It must stop."

March 14th, 1903. "A ride alone to Pi Yun Su, to arrange quarters for the excursion of next week. The most impressive scene of the whole day was on the road homeward—a bit of plowed land, with the laborers, a band of purple brush, a gnarled feather-topped tree, a dirt hut, and beyond the dark green of the evergreen, and the sky dull steel gray. It shall be sunset-rose in the picture. The earth too was pur-

ple with lines of tender green, a study in shades and gradations, soft, mellow, eastern. The sketch is not big enough nor mysterious enough. On second thought, the men should be dots. There must be color that vibrates."

March 29th, 1903. "Sketched Mishki in the afternoon and dined with Flaherty in the evening. He was the same as always. I read a little incident of the siege which he had written up and written very well. He is a good man, a sincere man and a gentleman. Had I his peace of mind I could make a good artist out of myself."

A Chinese girl by Willard Straight

May 20th, 1903. "After dinner tonight we discussed the I. G. (Sir Robert Hart). The various conditions that had placed him where he is. Early days as a Consular student, grinding at Chinese, later Deputy Commissioner at Canton, and then in charge of the Yangtze Valley. A young man of twenty-four or five dictating to men older than himself in his own Service, fighting the prejudice of his employers, the Chinese on the one side and the hostility of the foreign mercantile community on the other, steering straight and clean through the tempestuous waters, never shirking responsibility yet never seeking it, waiting and with his keen judgment sorting the wheat from the chaff, the important from the worthless. His wonderful memory, storing up precedent after precedent on all cases, building up his Service, pulling order out of chaos, ruling all with a close hand, yet finding time for little loves, for letters and poetry. How in the early 80's he was at his

heyday, when there were no international jealousies in China, when Ministers came out to hibernate for a year or two, sit tight, save money and romp on to new fields, when all business with the Chinese was done by having the diplomats call on the I. G., ask his advice and act accordingly, when his prestige among the Chinese was absolutely unassailable. Then when year after year the plot thickened, how he still played his game, enlarging his field of usefulness with the larger needs of the Far Eastern question. Strong in his position with years of precedent and a vast knowledge of the Chinese standpoint, he has been the most remarkable figure in Eastern politics.

"And so he has gone on year after year, developing, enlarging, strengthening the Customs, Coast and lastly Postal Departments of his great Service. A man who has a tremendous brain and a genius for organization with few equals. And yet this strong old man takes interest in every little thing, knows all that goes on about him, writes notes of friendship and love to many a maiden and is withal the I. G."

May 23rd, 1903. "Today I had the pleasure of meeting the famous MacAllum. D—— and myself had been interested at seeing this huge personage in the I. G.'s doorway at half-past four or thereabouts, and when we returned at seven we were much excited to find the same cart waiting at the gate. Who could it be? On returning we found MacAllum's card and he himself shortly afterwards appeared, to stay to dinner and yarn a bit afterwards.

"He told first of his experiences in Formosa, a yarn I had already heard, to a certain extent, from the Spinneys. He was at that time in the 'Out-Door' staff, and things were going very badly in Tai Wan. British sailors were stationed

at both ends of the Island and were holding things, much disturbed during the Japanese war, in check. At last Admiral Butler had withdrawn his men and the Consul had ordered all foreigners away. The community was packed into small barges and started through a tremendous sea for a British gun-boat in the offing. As they were going along, not comfortably you may be sure, the tow-rope broke and MacAllum and another Out-Door man with a crowd of Chinese went adrift, and were finally carried by the force of the waves to the shore. The tug-boat turned a deaf ear to all their demands for another trip out through the breakers. They absolutely refused to risk a watery grave a second time and MacAllum and his solitary companion were left stranded on the Island with a turbulent populace, thoroughly imbued with hatred of the foreigner. So they sat down, not exactly knowing what was going to happen. 'That night,' said MacAllum as he drew his cigar into a pleasant glow, 'they came and asked me if I'd be Commissioner.' 'You've hit the nail on the head, sir,' I replied. 'That's the keynote of the situation. Play a few more bars of that sweet tune, I like the harmony of it.' 'Are you ready to look after the Customs?' 'Certainly,' said MacAllum. 'Can you do it well?' 'Naturally,' was the answer. 'Will you then?' 'Yes.' 'So they got a tailor man of sorts to interpret and took me up to the Chin Chien, a Black Flag Chief, and a Cantonese man who couldn't speak Amoy dialect. After a while with much palavering, it was all arranged to the Queen's taste, and that's the way it began. Things ran along much the same as before. Nothing was changed, and the Revenue didn't drop a bit. I made 'em a most beautiful and ornate stamp, regular work of art it was, and things went along splendidly. The other

man, well, he was a bit of an ass, so I made him Tide Surveyor. The Consul and the merchants came back, and the man of law was greatly pleased to find things in such good order; so were the merchants. Then there came another row and the white-livered fools cleared out and the Con-

Drawing of a Buddhist acolyte
by Willard Straight

sul ran away and cursed me out properly for being a traitor and red Britisher, and many other things. After a while they all came back again and the same damned Consul told me how pleased he was to find things going on so well. That didn't make much difference, they went on

all the same. I retained a couple of Chinese clerks to help run the show. Saw one of 'em in Shanghai the other day, fat as a pig he was, disgustingly opulent and absolutely rolling in wealth and adipose tissue, and he founded his fortunes out of peculations made in Formosa under my régime. Fat and greasy and vilely wealthy, that man, and I came out of the show as poor as I went in.'

" 'No retiring allowances?' asked Ferguson. 'Didn't you even issue yourself a retiring allowance? By Gott, if I wass to be I. G. you bet I'd issue retiring allowances ten years in advance.' 'No, there were no retiring allowances,' he continued, 'but after a while the Japs came down and I heard they were going to hang me and do all sorts of things and the Consul was so hot he wouldn't have lifted a finger to pull me out. There had been lots of arms and ammunition and we'd been standing 'em off fairly well. But they came on at last with a big crowd. There was one fort, a big one, which I cleared out one night but left the flag flying. They turned up the next day with all their ships and began making circles and evolutions around the place and finally put twenty thousand or so men over on a spit of land and began to advance. The men of war shelled the place and swore that the fort returned the fire; but it couldn't; the damned thing was empty. At any rate they advanced on all fours to one line of cover, then scrambled over and down on their hands and knees again and forward once more. Then some Japanese Napoleon rose up in his might. "By God" he cried, "It's empty—follow me." And they did and took the place with much glory and a deal of shouting and a tremendous hullaballoo generally. Then they had the show in their hands and I turned over lots of arms and stuff and they promised to give me all sorts

of rewards. But they never did and ever since then I've had the most profound contempt for the Japs, the damned little monkeys.'

"He had a whiskey and soda and puffed at his cigar for a moment before going on. 'Well, that finished it. They took over the Formosan Customs, and it was a good job. I'd have been up a stump if it hadn't been for a cousin of mine on the 'Pique' who lent me some moral support. The Japs wanted me to take over the show and run it for them, and I said I didn't mind. Then they wanted to know what screw I thought was about right and I told the Consul a thousand yen a month would suit me, and didn't he think that reasonable. He thought it was reasonable though it was a damn sight more than he'd ever had. But the Japs raised an awful hubbub. They'd never heard of such outrageous demands and so went after the Tide Surveyor, who took the thing out of my hands. He'd been in hiding for a long time but bobbed up serenely enough when things quieted down. They used him for six months and learned all he knew, it wasn't much, and then turned him off on a dollar and a half a day. That finished the show and I went off to the interior as a camphor merchant, that is, I went for one, but that doesn't make much difference one way or the other.

" 'That suited me down to the ground. It was a lovely life. The savages brought in wild pig, pheasant and wild pigeon. There were oranges and wild honey, and I lay on my back all day and smoked while the savages made camphor, chopped the trees and steamed the chips, which same steam crystallized in the condensor into camphor as we know it. It suited me and I wouldn't mind being a camphor merchant again, not a bit. But you know I haven't got

that brutal dullness of perception that makes your wealthy merchant.'

"MacAllum himself is a tremendous man, at least 6 ft. 4, and heavy, a round face with dimpled chin, sensuous mouth with drooping moustache, curly gray hair and a splendid complexion. He gives one the impression of great sensuality, strength and much joy of life. He has a slow and preoccupied way of talking and seems rather quiet, a quaint knack of conversation and a ready wit; altogether splendid company and a big wholesome man."

June 18th, 1903. "There has, indeed, been a disgraceful interval of not writing. I have been in charge of the accounts office for just a week and a sorry job it has been with the postal accounts. On Sunday last I took the Llama to tiffin and the theatre and am now hoping to go to the Temple to see the Emperor on the night of the Chinese 27th.

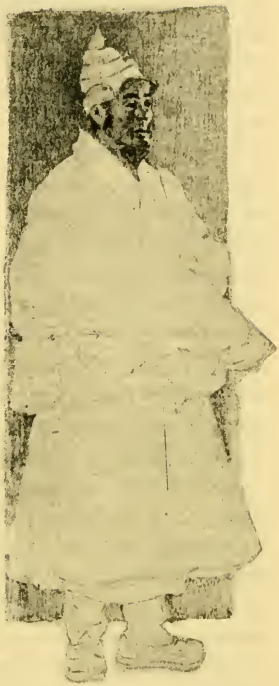
"Dined this evening with Townley, Lady Susan and Flaherty. A most amusing evening, Lady Susan yawning and complaining of sleepiness the entire evening. Mrs. Cockburn came in later and everyone seemed very much bored, but so absolutely frank about showing it that no one's feelings were hurt."

The reference in the preceding quotation to an expedition on the night of the Chinese 27th in order to witness the devotions of the Emperor calls attention to an escapade of Straight's, which at the time obtained some notoriety. On certain occasions the Emperor undertook an expedition to a

Buddhist temple at Yung Ho Kung in the neighborhood of Peking and there in the early hours of the morning underwent a ceremonial purification. Willard had persuaded a Llama to hide him and to permit his profane eyes to witness the ceremony. He arrived at the Llamassery in the night more than twenty-four hours previous to the ceremony. "The Llamassery" he says, "was asleep; there were scarcely any lights to be seen, and as we entered the little paved court and made for the candle light that gleamed through the open door at the other end, I could hear peaceful snores issuing from the rooms on the northern side. A dog barked as I passed along, but stopped again, and we went in to sit down and drink a cup or two of yellow wine and nibble at sugared nuts and pastry cakes. The priest who had arranged the whole affair then began to suggest all manner of direful things, how much trouble the whole thing had been, how he had been ashamed to come and see me because the men inside wanted so much money for passing me and how if they were ever discovered their heads would be the forfeit, and their 'Masters' even would lose their places. But to all my queries he, in fact the other man as well, answered that it could be managed, and that they would not be the sufferers at all. The second priest left the room for an instant and the pressing need for money was again brought home, with the terrors of the Imperial body guard, the Pa Ta Chen, and the alacrity and apparent pleasure with which they would decapitate the innocent offender.

"The priest who had been left as my companion waxed quite confidential, and told me of the life of the Llama, the training from childhood, the monthly stipend of money and rice, enough, but no more, to keep the wolf from the door. He told me too, of Buddha, the Great and Good, how he

came to Mongolia many centuries before to preach the tenets of faith and kindness to all manner of living things and how it was their duty, as his followers, to be silent and introspective, to lead pure lives. And, as he talked, his eyes brightened and he was carried by his own words into that pleasant state that one sometimes attains of believing that all the virtues that one may be talking of are personal attributes, rather than intangible generalities. A cricket was singing in its gourd home and as the dog turned restlessly, a little bell tinkled, odd accompaniments to the droning talk of the priest. The night noises came in from the city as the patter of the rain ceased, the wailing cries, the night watchman's rattle, the barking of a dog.



Drawing of a Buddhist lama by Willard Straight

"Towards morning it was time to go in. Secreting my revolver, why I don't know, in my coat pocket, I put on the purple Llama robes and donned the flat cymbal-like straw hat. My hair had been clipped earlier in the evening, a wonderful operation, performed by a priest, who knelt on the brick flagging and clipped and gouged with a pair of

nail scissors, while I bowed my head almost into the tallow dip that furnished the light for the amateur barber. Shuffling along, I followed my guide through the passage way out into the open. It was still dark, but there was a steel gray light just tingeing the east, as we walked along, jostling soldiers and priests, coolies and officials. The great courtyard was lighted by huge silken lanterns that threw a glow far over the pavement. Avenues of fibre matting ran here and there, prepared for the tread of sacred feet. But there was no time to waste, for any halt might mean detection (one or two men did in fact turn to stare as we passed a lantern shining all too brightly) but I went serenely on, not too fast, nor yet not tarrying longer than was necessary. Once inside the second enclosure there were fewer people about, and we quickly entered one of the side buildings, where I was told to sit down for a minute, then hustled up a steep flight of stairs, lest some prying person might discover me in the lower room and a sudden ending come to all of us. Climbing in between the supports of the altar I crouched in the dust and watched the light flicker and disappear as Wang went down the stairs, cautiously, quietly. Then I sat there waiting, waiting, listening to the noises outside, watching the gray light, brighten, slowly, very slowly, the paper of the lattice windows, bringing out spots of gray and patterns of black, where before there had been solid darkness."

After a very long and tedious wait throughout the following day, his patience was finally rewarded.

"Soon we heard the patter of approaching footsteps, and led by a high official came a double file of eight high priests, red button men in yellow lacquered hats, each carrying a stick of burning incense. They advanced at a rapid pace

through the western entrance. Then came another official and two more priests in tall startling helmets carrying golden censors. Then came the Emperor followed by eight more priests, and finally nine princes of the blood. The Llamas were clad in yellow silks with a red scarf thrown over their right shoulders, fastened at their waists with a yellow cord, and falling from there in great folds. They formed a double line on either side of the strip of matting as the Emperor went in, and then suddenly fell back. The eunuch had given the incense wand to his Majesty and disappeared also, leaving only the Princes standing outside the doorway. As the Emperor made his obeisance before the altar, the priests chanted in their deep tones, without the usual accompaniment of drums and cymbals and trumpets. It was a rapidly shifting scene, so rapid in fact that one can scarcely account for each successive movement thereof. It was over in an instant, and the priests went on, the Emperor passing through the 'Tien' to the next altar. The followers, large men carrying many parcels wrapped in yellow silk, one of them bearing what seemed to be a sword sheathed in yellow plush, sauntered after him in a most disorderly manner without ceremony of any kind.

"As the Imperial Party passed, my companions stood up, as did other priests on the balcony opposite, to walk away without seeming to care what they did or who saw them. I, however, lay quiet for a few moments and then went down stairs, where I waited until Wang Llama came back to lead me out into broad daylight again. I shuffled along through the courtyard, imitating as best I could the pace of the priests I had been watching. He led me to one of the guardian's rooms and there I waited again, talking with the occupant of the room the while, he being tremendously

amused by the droll appearance of a white man in a dirty purple gown. After a few moments, however, I was called into the passage way, and paused there with some ten or fifteen men keeping well in the background and waiting for the Emperor to have his refreshments, and enter once more into his chair. This conveyance stood in the centre of the court, resplendent in yellow silk, with golden trappings and yellow shafts and carrying cords. The bearers in purple gauze, white spotted gowns, and wearing spiked helmets, stood on either side. Two rows of high priests flanked the way and the whole court was full of life and bustle. The Imperial bodyguard, bearing huge green scabbarded swords, were wandering about, evidently looking for prey. There were fat eunuchs and officers in latter day uniform, and among them all the omnipresent servant with tea. Sitting, laughing, talking, all waited for the procession to move.

"At last there was a stir, and all eyes were turned to the east. The High Priest kneeled and the idlers rose to their feet in expectancy. At a rapid pace the same little official came forward, followed by the priests with the censors, then several more officials and finally the Emperor himself. In the first instance it had been impossible to distinguish him save by the fact of his wearing the round dragon badge on his breast and back as well as on his shoulders, while the Princes only had theirs upon their shoulders, wearing the square on both back and breast. As he came forward at a rapid but withal dignified pace, he made a peculiar impression. He wore simply the ordinary official hat with the blood-red button, a dark silken surcoat hid even his dragon insignia, and one could scarcely realize that this very young, very delicate looking man was the ruler in name at least of four hundred million people. A weak face, with arching,

jet-black eyebrows, his eyes on the ground before him, his shoulders and head thrown back, marching with a fixed pace steadily forward. He passed to the left of his chair and then went quietly in, the chair bearers kneeling as he did so, and officials kneeling and standing on either side. Without a word, without any delay, the chair was raised, the bodyguard fell in to the rear and followed by a stand of Imperial yellow banners with ermine streamers, the cortége passed through the side gate most unpretentiously, and as they left the bugles sounded and the whole procession moved on. It was wonderful, the precision, the quiet with which all was done, and the uproar which followed his departure. There was a tumultuous rush of priests for the temple gate, a hurry and hustle in the courtyard and through this mêlée I passed almost unnoticed.

"The most peculiar thing of all was that, while in the first part of the evening, up to the time in fact, when the Emperor left his devotions in the first court, all the men who had brought me in and arranged the affair were in a tremendous state of excitement and extremely nervous about the outcome, hinting direfully at the possibility of losing their heads, immediately the Imperial Party had passed on they were absolutely reckless, even while His Majesty was still in the Temple. During the few seconds he was entering his chair, I had watched the whole progress of events in the centre of a crowd of priests, men who stared at me and made remarks, and who could not possibly have been bribed into the secret. In going to Wang Llama's cell I had passed many more who must have recognized me as a rank outsider and made remarks upon the subject. But my guide seemed absolutely oblivious to all danger. In his quarters the Master came forth to greet me and asked me

Portrait of a Manchu lady
by Willard Straight

how I liked the whole affair, and whether or not it was interesting, and he was a High Priest. It was one of those same contradictory things that one is continually seeing in China, the self-deceiving playing with realities, the hollowness of all official convention, the sham of the whole nation that makes believe a certain thing must be done, and having gone that far are satisfied, as if the word and the conception could ever be the same as the accomplished fact."

Sept. 28th, 1903.

"This continual dining out is a pleasure, but likely to form an appetite for untasteable fruits which some day I shall rue. Why I should be meeting all these people and doing all these things, I know not. Certainly the position is not natural for a person of my means. Still it is extremely

attractive, interesting, fascinating and dangerous, and worthless, too, I fear, as far as practical, marketable character-making goes. It is not work, not Chinese or politics or anything, and if one does not do that when one is young, when, I'd like to know, will one have the time to do so?"

Oct. 20th, 1903. "Collins has offered me the opportunity of going to Korea as Reuter's correspondent, of seeing what might be going on over there and, in case of war, making good money and the chance of a name for myself. Certainly nothing more tempting has been put before me in a long time."

Oct. 29th, 1903. "The wars and rumors thereof are quieting a little, a momentary lull in the continuous noise of probabilities that has been humming about us for the past two weeks. Each day with its new story, each dispatch with some fresh sign of trouble. Threats, too, of another Boxer outbreak have been furnishing added material for dinner talk, which at ordinary times becomes either horsey or vulgar and in either case uninteresting. Prophecy would be fruitless and unprofitable, but it is hard to understand how Japan can ever back down with any face left, or any chance of ever rising above the condition of a third-class power. Her activity has always been limited to the Far East, and if now in the face of Russian aggression she shows the white feather and a willingness to make so-called 'mutual concessions,' it is hard to see how ten years hence she can be anything but swamped by the oncoming Muscovite tide."

Nov. 18, 1903. "Of life in general—it goes well. The mess is too vulgar, there is a limit to all things. Lewdness with wit is almost pardonable if there be a reasonable amount of the latter. Downright bar-room vulgarity is irritating. But what can one do? Bear it, and, by the listening,

be the more able and anxious to save oneself from ever creating in the minds of one's fellows the same feeling of disgust which this sort of gutter-wit and humor awakens in one's own breast."

Feb. 4th, 1904. "War is more than ever in the air—about us, always with us. Shall I go or not? How many days has the problem vexed my aching head? How many people have I bored with my argumentations on the pros and cons? How despicable it is to be hanging fire like a rusty gun! And how like a rusty gun is the whole affair, like to lead to disaster after any discharge, unless it be that of duty!"

Feb. 10th, 1904. "I received a letter from McCormick on Tuesday afternoon, telling me that Collins had placed him in charge of Reuter's interests in Manchuria and had left with the understanding that in case he should need me he was to wire Gatrell. This, of course, threw the responsibility on his shoulders and placed Gatrell and myself in a false position for we had both been looking to Collins for instructions. The letter altered my position somewhat and did much to dispel the doubts I had felt in the past few days whether or not Collins intended to call upon me at all. For that reason I went to see Mr. Conger, the American Minister, on Wednesday morning to ask him whether he considered that the transfer to newspaper work at such a time would jeopardize the chances of a successful career in the Customs. His advice was to go ahead with the former, the probabilities being that the latter would take care of itself. Gatrell tiffined with me at the Club and agreed to wire Collins for instructions about the position he was to take as regards McCormick. And so the matter stands."

Feb. 22nd, 1904. "The last week has witnessed about as complete a change in my plans as can well be imagined.

On Tuesday night came a wire from Collins, directing Gatrell to send me on to Nagasaki. My delight, naturally enough, knew no bounds. The opportunity for which I had been hoping for nearly two months past had come at last. . . .

"The next few days, of course, were busy with farewells and all manner of calls. The nights were horrible, packing, clearing, winnowing the wheat that I must take with me for my daily bread from the chaff that could easily be left behind. I received letters of introduction from many people, from Mr. Conger to Griscom and Allen as well as to all Consular and diplomatic officers in the Orient, from Sir Ernest to Sir Claude MacDonald in Tokyo, Jordan in Seoul, Brinckley and Young, as well as Viscount Aoki, who used to be the Minister for Foreign Affairs, from Uchida to Baron Komura and Baron Chinda, as well as Major General Fukushima, from Mumm to Graf von Arcovalley, as well as minor ones to more modest people. Thus equipped I could say farewell to the steady old Service, particularly since in leaving, the I. G. had written me a very nice letter and sent me his photograph. At the train were Cockburn and Kidston and Flaherty, Coolidge, Fletcher, Clark, Peck, Aglen, Richardson, Kurosawa and Sze, as well as many others, all of whose presence I appreciated tremendously."

Willard's connection with the Imperial Maritime Customs of China finished, consequently, about two years after it had begun. At the time he resigned he did not entirely dismiss the idea that some day he might resume his early employment. He wrote on February 23rd, 1904, to a friend and colleague in the Service, Mr. E. S. Howell: "The old gentleman was goodness itself and gave me his photograph and sent me a benediction-like note. The

chances are that the I. G. will take me back if in the end I want to go, for Aglen [Sir Robert's deputy] told me that before seeking other employment in China I'd better see the I. G. What he said had an unmistakably official ring to it." But Willard did not, I think, seriously intend to return to the Service. The routine of administrative work, whether in China or elsewhere, was never congenial to a man of his restless and indefatigable initiative. In quitting the Service he was in some measure escaping from a prison in which he would not, if he could help it, allow himself to be incarcerated again. His new prospects exhilarated him, not only because he was off to the war and was starting afresh, but because he was abandoning a career whose chief virtue had become merely prudential. In the letter to E. S. Howell, from which I have already quoted, he says: "For some time I have been on the wing. I had an offer in November and another at Christmas time, but as long as war was an open question I didn't think the step justifiable. But with cannons booming and the Temple of Janus open wide I could not resist the call, first of excitement and then of the pounds sterling whose seductive voice would lure any one even to the counting house, let alone the field of battle. So here I am on my way, feeling very much like a boy out of school, with my accepted resignation in one pocket and my commission from Reuter in the other and no seven-year service staring me in the face, nor any chief, of even the I. G.'s kindly sort, to knock my head to."

From the beginning Straight had looked forward with many reservations to a career in the Service. He wrote to Bascom Little from Nanking a few months after his arrival in China: "The life, my dear sir, may be wonderful, but though it suggests Kipling I doubt whether the strenuous

Sketch of Tien Lama by Willard Straight

idea to 'Stand by your work and be wise' enters into the discussion. It's foreign to the whole spirit of the Service, as I've seen it. So far, God knows, I'm glad enough to look at it that way. In fact it's the only way I can look at it and be at all satisfied with the cards I've drawn. But it's a hard row to hoe when you hear men on all sides of you damning it up and down, when you hear of the promotions of men who are notoriously poor office men, poor Chinese

scholars and the rest, and yet see men who are hard workers and bright chaps going three and four years without a stop, stationed in some God-forsaken outpost, eating their souls away. As a career plus the satisfaction of working for the work's sake I doubt its usefulness. As an opportunity for a man to study China and the Chinese language, customs and art it is unrivalled. The work is done in a routine way and requires only clerical ability until one becomes a Commissioner or an Assistant-in-Charge and is given the responsibility for the port. With luck it might be attractive; without luck or a pull it is a damned drudge. I myself am content to wait and play the game, watching my luck which has always held good. But the Service will never be my life nor success in the Service my aim. It will rather be to draw the Chinaman as he is or to write of him or to know him so well that some day I can put my finger in the 'international pie.' "

He had gone to China stirred by his adventurous spirit, his prophetic vision that the frontier of America had crossed the Pacific, and the fascination which his memories of the Far East exercised over his imagination. The men whom he most admired at that time were pioneers who, starting with no equipment but alertness, hardihood, sangfroid, the willingness to take chances and sound judgment about what chances to take, made of themselves a power in some barbarous or semi-civilized country and used their power to help the people of such a country to open up commercial relations and cultivate communications with the outside world. Manifestly the Imperial Maritime Customs offered no opportunity at all for a career of this kind. As his letter to Bascom Little shows, he looked at it chiefly as a stepping stone to more congenial opportunities. It provided him

with a means of livelihood while he was learning Chinese and finding or making a place for himself in China. Even as early as the Spring of 1902 he was clear in his own mind that his chosen career of a pioneer in China had nothing to do with a Commissionership of Customs. Nor did it mean, as it had a generation before, the invasion single-handed of some virgin territory. It had come to mean participation in an enterprise connected with the economic development of China, and it would, as he already realized, necessarily plunge him into the whirlpool of international politics and finance.

When, as the result of his successful examination, he was called immediately to Peking and placed in the headquarters staff of the Inspector General, he was momentarily dazzled by so brilliant an opportunity. He was ambitious as well as adventurous. He wanted the position, authority and income which would enable him to cut a figure in the world. He dreamed that all these boons would come to him without much delay, and such, indeed, might well have been the case. Sir Robert Hart evidently liked and believed in him. If he had remained in the Service, promotion would have rapidly followed. He soon would have found himself in a position of responsibility rare for a man of his years. Hence he hesitated when Collins first offered to him the work of correspondent. But he would not long have been satisfied even with a Commissionership, and the conviction that he would not be satisfied was gradually borne in upon him the longer he stayed in China. It partly accounts for his increasing restlessness and for the dissatisfaction with himself to which the diary so frequently gives expression.

The group of motives which had attracted him to the Far East were irresistible, but they were nebulous. They

were derived from many different sources and could have fused finally into many different careers. He was feeling around. His twenty months in Peking did not decide for

Drawing of Henry Prather Fletcher
by Willard Straight

him what his career would be, but they helped him to rule out certain definite alternatives. The two roads to success which stretched out in front of him were, of course, the Customs Service and the more precarious and roving life of an illustrator and artist. The experience which he gained in Peking disenchanted him with the prospects of these two careers. His disposition was too restless and too executive

Two Chinese sketches by Willard Straight

to find satisfaction as an artist. It was too enterprising, too inventive and too independent to find satisfaction as a bureaucrat. He did not recognize the second of these conclusions as clearly as he did the first. His prospects as a member of the Service were excellent and promised him a secure, lucrative and responsible job. But it was equally true that if China had continued to offer no vista but bureaucratic routine and gradual promotion as a Customs Inspector or Commissioner, he would eventually have returned to the United States.

In spite of his personal popularity, his flattering prospects for advancement in the Service and the pleasure which he obtained from observing and sketching Chinese life, he was

unhappy in Peking. As time wore on he was more rather than less unhappy. After he had conquered the initial difficulties of learning the Chinese language, his actual work did not absorb his energy, and its prospects for the future could not focus his imagination. He could not make up his mind what he wanted to do, and the uncertainty increased his dissatisfaction. It expressed itself in a self-conscious pre-occupation with his own failings and in a troubled sense of inferiority. If he was to be on good terms with himself, he had to see himself as the voluntary servant of some great event. Instead of that he was occupied with the petty competitions and emulations of routine official work and the distractions of a small, intensely personal, idle and irresponsible society. There were compensations, of course, but they did not satisfy him. He felt himself drifting, and he needed as a necessary element in his self-esteem to feel that he was personally directing his life towards some desirable end.

If the Russo-Japanese War had not broken out and Willard Straight's hesitation and unhappiness and self-distrust had continued, he might, before he had made up his mind to break away and start again, have injured permanently his mechanism of impulse, education and self-expression. As a result of the vicissitudes of his education as a boy, this mechanism was easily jammed, and if the interference which had started during his last year in Peking had continued, it would have been difficult to repair. But Willard's rescue, if rescue it should be called, was not merely a lucky accident. He had earned it by another of his salient personal characteristics—by his ability to give and to inspire friendship and create confidence between himself and other men.

In February 1904 he could not boast of many obvious qualifications as a war correspondent. He had no equipment either for journalism or for war. He knew nothing about the country in which the fighting was taking place and little about the people who were doing the fighting. He was only twenty-four years old and had enjoyed small experience of men and affairs. Yet an able journalist picked him as one of the representatives of a great press association, and Willard himself, in spite of the spasms of self-distrust from which he had recently suffered and of some apparent hesitation, never when an opportunity offered really doubted himself. What he did was to dart towards the opening, as a trout rises at a fly. He could do and believed that he could do almost anything he wanted to do. He could create a similar belief in other people. A man who knew him and liked him, as Mr. Collins knew him, realized that in spite of his youth and lack of equipment, he would have no difficulty in qualifying himself to become a war correspondent.

The Russo-Japanese War and the opportunity to serve in it as correspondent did not enable him to hitch the wagon of his daily occupation to the star of his imagination, but it did snatch him out of his immediate doubts and difficulties. War calls irresistibly to the young adventurer. It is no wonder Willard threw his cap into the air and shouted for joy when he cast aside the monotonous work and the now insipid amusements of Peking and started for the front. It was not, it is true, his own adventure. He was not starting as a soldier to fight in company with his own people for what he believed to be a just cause. But in going as a reporter he was not doing any violence to his impulses. For it was almost as congenial for him to report stirring events

as it was to take part in them. He was always and in every important relationship something of a journalist and something of an illustrator. He was always an articulate onlooker as well as an actor. Now for a brief moment he was to try himself out, no longer as the recorder of his own experiences to himself, but as the reporter of a great historical event to an audience of his fellow-countrymen.

CHAPTER V

ON THE SIDE LINES OF THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

WHEN Willard Straight left Peking on February 22nd, 1904, he was, I have said, rather abandoning an obsolete vehicle than boarding one which would carry him whither he proposed to go. He was not adopting the profession of journalism. He was merely using his assignment to a peculiarly exciting piece of reporting as a pretext for breaking with an uncongenial occupation. Neither was the decision a mistake. The new job was only an episode in his life, but it was an episode which stimulated his mind, broadened his experience, enlarged his circle of interesting and helpful friends and paved the way at a later date for his most characteristic enterprise. It proved to be a useful introduction to his subsequent connection with international politics in the Far East.

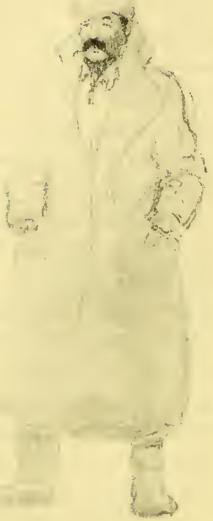
Until then he had not given much thought to the relation between China and Japan and the Western Powers. He discusses in his diary whether or not another Boxer uprising was impending and the advantage which an autocratic government, such as Russia, has over the English parliamentary government in promoting what are assumed to be national interests abroad, but he was not considering the realities of international competition in the Far East as a matter which might affect his own life. He had no very articulate convictions about them. So far as he expressed himself he was

sympathetic with the traditional American policy in China of equality of economic opportunity for all nations and of the territorial integrity and political independence of that much violated and despoiled country. But the diplomatic atmosphere in Peking had made him sceptical for the moment whether a disinterested policy like that of the United States would ever prevail. He knew that Russia, in spite of many promises not to despoil China, was steadily enlarging her "sphere of influence" in Korea, Mongolia and Manchuria, and her European associates were inclined less to protect China than to seek compensation for themselves.

Japan, however, was differently situated. Russia already possessed Siberia and the island of Saghalien. If she dominated Korea and Manchuria, she would threaten the future interests and security of Japan. The common assumption was that, if the Japanese nation consented, it would in effect close the door to its future expansion and accept the position of Russia's vassal. When Japan refused to consent, consequently, her resistance aroused the sympathy of nearly all Americans. Whatever her own ultimate objectives in China, she was for the moment acting as a barrier against the oncoming tide of Russian imperialism. His new assignment forced Willard Straight to adjust his opinions to this conflict. Naturally he became an ardent sympathizer with Japan. She was the smaller of the two belligerents and she was courageously resisting a clear case of aggression. Being on the spot he rapidly learned a great deal about the area of conflict, the underlying issues, the motives and resources of the two antagonists and the situation of poor China, which, being the bone of contention, was destined, willy-nilly, to be gnawed by the victorious nation, no matter which it was.

The journey to Tokyo would normally have occupied only a few days, but what with the red tape and the shortage of steamers incidental to the war, it took him almost two weeks. He had to proceed by slow stages to Tientsin, Chefoo and Shanghai, and there to endure a long delay before embarking on a steamer to Japan. He had to satisfy the Japanese Consul at Shanghai regarding his status, the purpose of his errand and his personal character present and past; and all of this involved exchanges of cables between Shanghai, Tokyo, Peking and Washington. He did not arrive in Kobe until March 2nd. Back in Japan he had no difficulty in recalling some part of his new surroundings. "The street smells were familiar. I knew the rancid odor of the fish shops, the reek of the pickled turnips, the scent of the bean cake, and across the chasm of years came the recollections of the highways I had rickshawed through in the old days." But with China fresh in mind he takes keen pleasure in the architecture. He finds a "delicacy in even the wooden lattice on the meanest house that is grateful after the heavy rude vulgarity of the Chinese street. The wood with its dark brown grain, its soft velvety surface, the fields of plaster, the intersecting lines of the half-timber work—all are charming and in good taste."

When he finally reached Tokyo on March 10th, he joined a company of forty or more correspondents who had absolutely no idea of their probable date of departure for the front. "The air of the Imperial Hotel was a bright blue from early morn to golden sunset. Famous journalists, veterans of countless campaigns were held up, bound hand and foot by the dapper little Orientals whose attitude throughout has been greatly wondered at and most profanely admired. There was Knight of the Telegraph who lost



Drawing of a Russian soldier by Willard Straight

an arm in South Africa, Melton Prior, the artist of the London Illustrated News, O. K. Davis, with Richard on the road, Palmer of Collier's, Bass of the Chicago Herald, Martin Egan of the Associated Press, Collins for Reuter, and a host of others less notable but equally discontented. The situation was unique in the annals of journalism. A government holding the rabid pressmen at a distance, censoring their simplest stories, yet patting them on the back, dining them, wining them, giving them picnics and luncheons and theatrical performances and trying in every way not only to soften their bonds and to make their stay a pleasant one, but siren-like, to deaden their sense of duty and their desire to get into the field."

Willard himself did not linger long in Tokyo. He started almost immediately for Korea which he reached on March 16th. His first impression of Seoul was "strange enough:—a long stretch of road from the south gate, heavy and full of ruts, smoky flickering lights burning in only a few of the

mud-thatched, ill-favored buildings on either side of the long roadway,—the ghostly forms of the white-clad Koreans wandering up and down, an occasional Japanese picket, warmly clad in his blanket coat with its fur collar tightly turned up over his ears." He found the Korean metropolis picturesque. The streets possess "more color,

In front of the Russian Consulate in Mukden

more of a pictorial quality for some reason than one feels in a Chinese thoroughfare—the white garb of the men, their flimsy hats, sometimes straight, sometimes cocked rakishly over one eye, the huge umbrellas under which the mourner wends his way, holding a small flat screen to hide the deep lines of sorrow that sadden his features, the women, Moorish almost they seem, with their cloaks over their heads, the sleeves flapping about their ears. Green is the prevalent colour, white is common, purple one seldom

sees. Children run about, their pigtails flapping and they are a gay sight in pink coats or in mauve; small tots sometimes having wondrous rainbow bands around their arms.

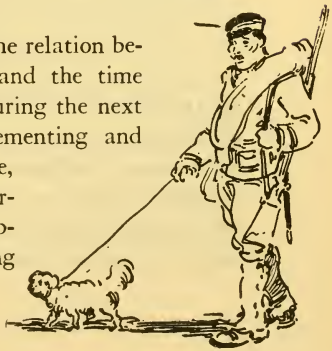
"The Korean seems to typify the spirit of the Orient. He is East Asia personified, in the chrysalis, a white cocoon. In China it was the Taoist priest who brought back most vividly the mental picture that fairy tales and mellowed kakemonos had formed when a small boy in Japan. About the snowy garbed Korean there is the atmosphere of a Japanese print. He has a thinness of coloring, a softness that impresses itself upon me, not on my optic nerves certainly, but in a sentimental way entirely. So calm, so dignified he seems, so absolutely self-contained, unflustered and even stolid as he saunters, puffing his pipe, content with the world and above all content with himself."

When Willard Straight landed at Seoul, the Japanese had already won their first naval and military victories in the war, and one result of their success was an effective, if possibly temporary, definition of the long doubtful status of Korea. For twenty years her neighbors had intrigued with different factions in her own government for superiority of influence. "Plots and counterplots, poison, assassination, arson, have all been the means employed to secure the desired end. Pro-Chinese, pro-Russian and pro-Japanese parties, cliques who hated all foreigners, cliques who loved and admired the Western learning without reference to nation-

ality, all these clashing elements have made the life of the oldest inhabitants anything but humdrum, even in this land of the Morning Calm.

"After the Chinese were driven from the field by the war of 1894-5, Japanese influence was undisputed until the murder of the Queen lost for them all the power they had purchased with the blood and money expended in their struggle with China. Then the Russian eagle was high in the heavens and there it remained until February 9th, 1904, when the Japanese pricked the Russian bubble at Chemulpo and Port Arthur." After the murder of his wife in 1895, the Emperor of Korea was favorable to Russian influence and policy, but as soon as the war broke out, he signed a treaty with Japan which amounted virtually to an alliance. "Korea promised to aid the Japanese and to allow them to use her territory as a base. Her external relations were to be carried on under Japanese supervision and her internal reforms to be inaugurated by Japanese experts. By courtesy she in turn was treated as a sovereign power, the independence and integrity of Korea were guaranteed, the Imperial family was to be protected and their throne secured. Practically, the convention declared a protectorate over the land."

Such was his first impression of the relation between Korea and her neighbors, and the time which he passed in that country during the next few months was spent in supplementing and broadening it. He was, of course, primarily and busily but still abortively engaged in trying to corroborate alleged items of news. During



The head of a Russian moujik by Willard Straight

this particular period there was a shortage of interesting developments, and whenever anything happened those who knew about it engaged in a successful conspiracy to prevent it from leaking out. He eagerly followed up every clue which came his way, but they were not numerous and important, and the young correspondent with his usual dispo-

sition to blame himself rather than conditions for any ill-success, took the meagreness of his dispatches very much to heart.

"The days roll on," he writes in his diary on April 4th. "No news comes into the net. Each day I interview ministers and attachés and people of all sorts and of all degrees of importance, but the task is well nigh hopeless. I cannot help feeling that in some ways I am unsound. Inexperience could perhaps explain the difficulty; it cannot excuse it. It is human nature to make mistakes; it is human nature to do things in the ordinary way. The world expects the young man to be less acquainted with its tricks, easier to befool, to handle, to be of less value in all positions requiring not only natural ability but years of training. Yet it is when the young man of undoubted talent, of extraordinary power, has the chance, that he shows what he is made of. To be better than you are expected to be, to be able to handle a situation by common sense in lieu of experience, to be able more than to hold the position in which you find yourself no matter how important—to be able to do that, means success. To do less means that you are like the rest. This to an ambitious man means failure. Temporary only perhaps, but failure nevertheless." Yet he was not discouraged. Some three weeks later, he gives himself some good advice: "The more I read in the other papers, the more I am convinced that my lack of experience is a great handicap, but a difficulty that must and will be overcome. Another thing! I must not say unkind things about people, nor must I get too enthusiastic. Freshness must above all things be avoided. Steady at the game, always at your intellectual best, always observant, making notes, remembering—that's the way to do it. Now go."

But if he was not successful in sending dispatches which enlightened the world about the vicissitudes of the war, he was none the less observing what was going on around him and recording what he observed. His diary, his letters and his articles are rich in information about the condition of Korea at that time, the nature of Korean industry and trade, the incredible frivolity and corruption of the government, and the methods which the Japanese were already using to extinguish Korean independence. This information he derived chiefly from the questioning of men who were in a position to know. He had long conversations in particular with the American Minister, Dr. Allen, who had lived in Korea many years, and with an Englishman, McLeavy Brown, the Inspector General of Customs. From them he learned about the palace intrigues which demoralized the

Sketch of a group of Russian officers playing cards by Willard Straight

government and which prevented it from offering any effective resistance to foreign aggression.

May 1st, 1904. "McLeavy Brown was most communicative

on this, Sunday, afternoon. He's a genial old gentleman at any time but today he was pleasantness itself. We spoke of the Korean Court and the pro-Russian intriguers. He assured me that the Emperor, if he leaned toward anyone or anything except himself and pampering his own wants, was a pro-Russian in his sympathies. When —— was Minister in America, it was announced that Lady Om was about to have a child. The diplomat wired to his Imperial Master—'If Lady Om has a child, you needn't think you're its father.' The Emperor was much wrought up. He fumed for several days and then spitefully replied—'You shut up. What do you know about it?' This was a sample, said the canny McLeavy Brown, of the official correspondence between the Emperor and the diplomatic body."

Sketch of Frederick Palmer by Willard Straight

May 4th, 1904. "McDonnell and myself dined with Hagiwara and Kuroda at a Japanese restaurant. Geishas danced and I cannot say that I was particularly impressed. Their

attitudes seemed awkward, particularly the strange heel and toe movement. One little girl with a marvelous head-dress seemed to be the pride of the establishment. Hagiwara's song on the Beauties of Seoul impressed me more than any thing else. He, the First Secretary of the Legation, several times Chargé d'Affaires, sat there and sang of the spring flowers on the hillside, the tender greens of the foliage near his home, of the summer scenes on the River, the boating parties, the silver shining moon, of the autumn and the golden maple, the reds and yellows of the trees blushing at the first cold breath of winter, of the snows that come with the shortened days and the whitened hills. He improvised as he went along. He seemed near to nature. It is the keynote of Japanese life. The diplomat, the man who with his chiefs outwitted the Russians, sang of the simple woodland and its charms. The soldier fighting with every scientific appliance known in modern warfare, understanding its mechanism, finds his pleasure in admiring the iris bloom or the cherry blossoms."

During these months of anxious reporting of the war and close inspection of the political geography of Korea, three Americans put in an appearance in Korea, one of whom was destined to provide for Willard the occupation which succeeded his current work as correspondent. On June 1st, he writes, "Wendell has turned up with Morgan and Bowditch following a few days later." This refers to an expedition to the East undertaken by Barrett Wendell,

Jr., Peter Bowditch and E. V. Morgan, the object of which can best be described in Mr. Morgan's own words. Mr. Morgan had known Morse Stephens during a period of residence in Ithaca and had already heard about Willard from that gentleman. The State Department had just commissioned him as American Consul at Dalny, and when he arrived at Seoul he was en route for his new post.

"The Japanese Army," he states, "had already passed through Korea and had won the Battle of the Yalu, when Bowditch and I reached Seoul in June, 1904. Willard was there, representing the Associated Press, and our first meeting occurred at the Legation the morning after my arrival while he was in the process of paying the daily visit which he made in order to gather the current news. Tall, slim, with reddish-brown hair, of unusual frankness and charm of manner, perfectly at his ease, I at once recognized those rare and attractive personal characteristics which Morse Stephens had described. Our friendship started from the moment of introduction, as it could scarcely have failed to do, in view of its genesis and of the common interest in Eastern affairs which bound us closely. The result was that I asked Willard to accompany me to Dalny when the Department of State should order me there. Wendell and Bowditch could only remain with me a few months, and I had need of another

Discussing the siege of Port Arthur

private secretary to fill the vacancy. I also proposed to recommend him to the Department for nomination as Vice-Consul, an office which would give him—as it afterwards proved—an easy access into the Consular Service."

Although Willard could not take immediate advantage of this offer, it appealed to one of the liveliest of his interests —an interest which had been submerged up to the present, but which now becomes increasingly conscious and effective. He was intensely patriotic. He preferred above any other service the service of his own government. One reason why he chafed at being an employe of the Chinese Customs was its practically international status and the parti-colored nationalism of its personnel. It condemned him to a neutrality which he did not feel and which was foreign to the positive character of his impulses and convictions. He attempted while in Peking to get into the Consular Service, but it came to nothing. The offer of Mr. Morgan opened up a route which he subsequently travelled with far-reaching results upon his future career. It is interesting to re-

mark how early in their acquaintance the subject matter of their common future work assumed form. He writes on June 2nd, "A long and most interesting and instructive talk this morning with Morgan. His ideas on the situation in Korea impressed me as being precise and correct. He proposed to leave the Japanese vs. Korean side out of the question and turn to the Japanese vs. the Foreign. The mistake of all the Occidental nations, he claimed, was a too servile imitation of the Japanese and Russian attitude, that any commercial concession carried with it a corresponding political privilege. With these two Powers the object was well understood to be part of a general scheme for expansion; but it was unnecessary for the other countries to enter the lists with the same spirit. Their Ministers should not take too great a personal interest in business matters and speak of the American interests and the British interests rather than the interests of this or that American or such and such an Englishman. The difficulty anticipated was the struggle between the Japanese and the white capitalists, the refusal of the conquerers to use foreign funds unless all political significance was disassociated. The attitude of the American in the matter. His chance to forge ahead."

Head of a Russian soldier by Willard Straight

Late in June the routine of Willard's work at Seoul was interrupted by the ad-

vent of the "Manshu Maru." This vessel was a passenger steamer of the Russian volunteer fleet, which the Japanese had captured at the beginning of the war in Nagasaki Harbor. The Japanese government equipped her with the necessary food and liquor and sent her on a tour of inspection along the Korean coast loaded with correspondents and other "privileged persons." It was an effective method of keeping them occupied without allowing them to approach near enough to the war to learn anything about it. When they arrived at Seoul, they were much entertained.

June 25th, 1904. "There was a great audience today, probably the largest audience that His Imperial Korean Majesty ever gave in his long but varied existence. The Japanese, in introducing to the Palace some sixty people, the whole party aboard the 'Manshu,' gave striking evidence of the influence they now have in the Korean court. We arrived at the Palace about half past three, some by rickshaw, some by chair, and were ushered into the antechamber where cigars and cigarettes were passed around. Hagiwara, Chargé d'Affaires, and Nabeshima instructed the chiefs of the various parties in the proper procedure to be followed in the Imperial Presence. The Master of Ceremonies filed an objection to Dunn's appearing with a white shoe on one foot and a bamboo sandal on the other, and that cheerful youth after having offered to stay out altogether finally secured a pair of shoes from one of the Marines in the American Legation nearby and was able to go in with the rest, wearing his order 'Pinyang for the Pinyanigans' and distinguishing his entrée by bowing to His Majesty, the Crown Prince, and the No. 1 Eunuch. There were three batches received, first the foreign Naval and Military Attachés, headed by Jackson, British, with the members of

the Japanese Foreign Office, then the members of the Japanese Diet, headed by Marquis Kuroda, Vice-President of the Board of Peers, and finally the correspondents, headed by Frederick Villiers, as fine an old chap as ever drew a battle scene. We were ranged some dozen of us on his Majesty's right, standing behind Hagiwara, the Japanese journalists on the left. The old gentleman smiled affably, the Crown Prince, who looked half-baked, twiddled his fingers and twisted his toes, the No. 1 Eunuch at his side held his rice-fed paunch in both hands. He was a gigantic man with an evil face. In the background were Korean generals, two on each side, and assistant Masters of Ceremonies and vice-presidents of things hovered on the outskirts. We stopped inside for some five minutes and then filed out again. From this function we went on to the Japanese Legation where Hagiwara entertained the 'Manshu's' and the Korean officials and the foreign community at a Garden Party. Here, as at the Palace the day before, the white-robed Koreans were in the background always, pushed to the wall literally—the representatives of a power whose sun had already set, whose national life was gloomy in a storm-clouded twilight, lurid with the lightning glare of a great war."

A day later Willard himself joined the distinguished but somewhat miscellaneous party on the "Manshu Maru" and shared the discomforts, the tribulations and the irritations which attended its progress from port to port. One quotation from his diary about this incident will suffice.

July 13th, 1904. "Another day at the mouth of the Yalu—still waiting. The Commander of the Port was expected in the morning. He came at three o'clock in the afternoon. He then talked for two hours. After that a notice was

posted that owing to the floods in the river we should have to wait here until word came from Tokyo whether we were to keep on waiting here for the river to subside before making the trip or go on and then see the Battle Field

Portrait sketch of Fukushima by Willard Straight

on our return. It also said that there is a great deal of sickness, dysentery and typhoid and smallpox at Yongampho and Antung. Each place gives new reasons for delay. The fertility of the Japanese expedients is worthy of a better cause. The delay and its effects on different people brings out markedly the difference between the Japanese and the

white man. The Japanese peers and commoners and aldermen and journalists don't seem to give a good damn. They eat and drink and chatter and play 'Go' with never a squirm. The foreigners, attachés and journalists are in a fever of impatience. There is constant kicking; they pace the decks; they read and play bridge all with no heart. Everything is so indefinite. No news of the outside world, nothing, absolutely nothing on which to lay one's hand. This is the awful part of it all."

By July 30th, Willard had returned to Tokyo, there to remain without interruption for about six months. During this period he assisted Martin Egan and Henry Gatch in reporting diplomatic developments of the war, in handling the news from the front as it emanated from the War Office, and in wrestling with the press censorship. "No other newspaper staff in Tokyo," says Mr. Collins, "could compete with this combination or win to the same extent the confidence of the Japanese officials. Their work was essentially on the order of diplomacy. Straight soon gained for himself the same sort of position in Tokyo which he had held in Peking. He was on good terms with both Japanese and foreign officialdom."

These months were, however, more important for their indirect than for their direct effects on his life. The excitement, the diversity and the intrinsic interest of the work fully occupied his mind. His diary does not contain a single entry which reflects any revival of self-distrust or any doubts about his future. Yet it was not journalism which was interesting him.

It was the people he was meeting, the stirring events in which he was playing a humble part and his opportunity of better understanding the realities of business and politics in the Far East.

He came to know the Japanese extremely well. He himself dealt with Japanese officials from day to day under conditions which enabled him frequently to penetrate beneath the skin. He was intimate with many of their leading politicians. He had the inestimable advantage of long conversations with Henry Willard Denison, the American adviser of the Japanese government. As the result of this close contact his respect for them increased and at the same time his distrust of them. He remained, as he had begun, on the whole pro-Japanese, but with many qualifications and misgivings. While they imposed themselves on him by their singleness of purpose, their national unity and their success, he never liked them, and in his opinion, Denison, the American who knew them best and served them intelligently and faithfully for so many years, liked them as little as he did. But his American friends in Tokyo took quite as much of his time as did the Japanese. He saw much of Lloyd Griscom, then American Minister to the Japanese government, of Richard Harding Davis and his wife, Cecil, for both of whom he conceived a warm friendship, and something of John Fox and the other correspondents who came and went between Tokyo and some part of the armies in the field. His diary is copious during these months but a few quotations must suffice.

Aug. 22nd, 1904. "Today I called at the house of an Elder Statesman. There was a wonderful garden. Tall feathery topped trees, shaggy pines, crisp, firm topped clyptomerias, waving maples, willows, all massed in various shades of

green against the silvery afternoon sky. They shaded a little lake—the home of the feather-tailed gold fish. Water bugs darted hither and thither. Dragon flies shimmered over the leafy reflection in the water. On the grassy shores were old stone lanterns, the paper in the great square eyes torn and draggled by rain. Back from the water-front swept a well kept lawn, close-cropped and firm underfoot. Then came the strange note in this Eastern picture, a scaffold clad building of brick and stone and skim milk colored, half painted woodwork. Little workmen in blue tights, heads handkerchief bound, hammered and sawed, raised a din that mingled with the everlasting shrill rattling of the cicadas. What a contrast between the old garden and the garish brick house!"

November 1st, 1904. "A walk with —— this afternoon. He had much to say about the Japanese and their land, and more particularly their form of representative constitutional government, which is not. How each clause in the instrument is qualified 'if it does not interfere with the government policy'—that lump that leavens the whole loaf. Religious freedom, freedom of the press, the right of franchise and all the rest. The days of the Shogunate are not past. The Divinity in the Palace is no more the real thinking head of affairs than were his ancestors in the Kyoto Palaces. A twentieth century figure-head, shorn of some of the mediaeval tinsel, some of the old-time mysticism, but as a ruler still devoid of real power. The incident of the $150,000, paid as an indemnity to a business

Portrait sketch of a passenger on the Siberian railway by Willard Straight

house, of which no account ever appeared in the national budget—an item whose very existence was a secret, was wired abroad for the sake of creating an impression, but was absolutely denied publication in Japan proper. Such is the vanity of this wonderful little people. Many things of this sort are possible. There seems to be no checking system for accounts. There are sums of money accessible to the government the existence of which is unknown to the outside world. Secretive, suspicious as individuals, these Asiatic characteristics are carried into every detail of their national life."

Early in February much to his own satisfaction he left Tokyo for Newchwang just on the border of the fighting zone and under Japanese occupation.

Feb. 9th, 1905. "Away from Tokyo. And Tokyo's not so bad when one looks back over it and thinks of all the things that one has seen and done, the people one's met, and (it's to be hoped) the friends one's made. The last days in the mess were busy. They had been the same from the beginning, from the time we first went into the House on the Hill. Long nights spent in the wicker chairs in front of

the smelly open-faced stove, with the damned parrot in the corner, squawking or biting at the strange bamboo curtain with the sporran tassels that hung down over the glass shoji. Doddles in a corner, white in red slippers. Martin Egan stretched upon the divan, a cigar in his mouth, laying down the law with encyclopaedic accuracy. Tales of all manner of things, yarns of the wide world, South Africa, the Philippines, the Dark City, the Continent, discussion military, naval and political with specialists, and the Japanese character under the limelight, White and Dodsworth pro and con. All the men who came from the front stopping in for lunch or dinner, Port Arthur tales told over and over again, yarns from the Shaho, Bartlett's lectures, Smith's books in their incipiency. The knowing of the men who knew, if not the acquaintance with the events they had and were to chronicle.

"There were farewell dinners, last talks with the Elder Statesmen at the Club, Denison and Stone and Gubbins, a

A Japanese flotilla at the Elliot Islands, Port Arthur, by Willard Straight

farewell call on Komura, who promised letters to the Consul at Yangkow, and to the Administration, his old schoolfellows. A pleasant morning with Terauchi, the Minister for War, with Murata, the Inventor of the Rifle, with little Horiguchi, who smiles sweetly and talks to his interpreter, as wise a little Jap as one will meet—a future General and the prodigal donor of postal cards.

"The Lord High Master of Ceremonies, during Fushimi's visit to America, gave me a dinner at one of the Japanese restaurants. It was a splendid affair with geishas and great wrestlers sitting about, the Delilahs and the Samsons of Tokyo. A wonderful juggler, garbed in blue, with strange purple wristlets and a lavender lining in his sleeves, squatted in front of a great gold screen, performing marvelous tricks—on either side of him were lacquered boxes bearing a strange device. In front of him stood candles twain and in the passage to the left sat invisible musicians who tinkled and thrummed and piped unceasingly. The brown man talked to himself as he deftly modelled flowers and leaves and stuck them on the bare branches in the pots before him. He talked still more while the tops he handled so cleverly whirled along on the sword edge to its point, while he worked the centre one of five tops on a tray, and danced the silk-jacketed lion and the two dolls, marionettes. His crowning feat, the drawing of the rooster from the dough ball, was the very best, better than the whirl of ribands and the paper butterfly. Sato, the Lord High Steward was getting tighter and tighter. Bumper after bumper of saké was distributed in his ample insides. Feroshima, dandy and high liver, nearby, would have none of the saké drinking, but laughed only—and in a disdainful way at Henry Gatch, journalist, who was rallying the leading

Portrait sketch of General Kuroki
by Willard Straight

geisha on her fickle heart and many conquests. He had known her of old, he said, and his eyes glistened with much drink. She has broken many a good man, and her path is white with bankrupt homes."

He arrived at Newchwang about February 20th, and began for the first time to work as a veritable war correspondent as near the front as most correspondents reached in that much censored war. He writes to a correspondent on March 14th:

"As a matter of fact, the neutrality of this country has been a farce from the very beginning. Japan told a falsehood when she announced to the Powers that there were no Japanese officers with the Hunghutzu. I have seen these worthies at Hsinmintun. They are as fine a lot of blackguards as one might wish for. Colonel Yokura, the Japanese Administrator, gave me a letter to their Chief and to a Japanese Lieutenant and Colonel of Cavalry who with three other officers directed the operations of the Band. They carried Japanese flags, and one of the men told me that the ordinary troopers received $14 a month from the Japanese. While I was in Hsinmintun, they beheaded two Russians. One was dressed in Chinese clothes, the other was the only captive they had taken out of a body of twenty-four Russian scouts whom they had surrounded in a small village nearby. One man escaped, the others had been killed. This last, who seemed to be an officer, they stripped to the waist and killed. I asked the Chief why he did it. He told me that the men were spies, that it would be a nuisance to cart them around anyway, and besides the Japanese 'great man' had ordered them to do so. The Japanese were in occupation of Hsinmintun at the time of the execution.

"Later in the day I went over to the Hunghutzu camp and on my way home one of the cheerful bandits tried a pot shot at me at ten yards. This was because I wore a fur cap and he thought I was a Russian. I hastily explained that I was an American at which he was much pleased and smiled

all over. If he had not been a most awful marksman, he would never have had the pleasure of learning my nationality. That night I returned to Watt's Hotel and interpreted for the Japanese officer who came in Chinese clothes to seize the Port Arthur man. Strangely enough the wily Russian claimed to be a German. There were three other Russians there—a priest, a wounded officer, minus an arm, his servant, all asleep. The Japanese came in. I had seen them outside just before and talked with the alleged Chinaman. They rushed the place with a file of soldiers and through me asked who had arrived that night. 'Four men,' they answered. 'Who were they?' 'Three Russians,' said number four, 'and myself who am German.' He spoke very good English. The Japanese could speak better English than he could Chinese but that made little difference. So there I was, Jap alias Chinaman on one side, Russian alias German on the other, both bluffing, hunter and hunted. They finally brought him to earth, I believe, by the discovery of three Russian swords. The priest couldn't carry one, they said, so it must be the German, and what should even a German want of a sword in neutral territory. It was a great place, Hsinmintun. It was the capital of 'No Man's Land.' " He writes to J. O. P. Bland a day later, "Of all places for a mongrel's life, Hsinmintun was the best. The place was so alive with stories that I would have given anything to be able to stay up there for a time. But no such luck. I went up on my own bluff and was called back at once. At any rate I've slept on the bar at Watt's Hotel and that is a great thing, particularly when you have a poker game going on within two feet of you all night long—a game where American bad men, Greeks, Poles, Jews, a Russian and a German-

Russian spy are threatening to draw guns at any moment. It was my first taste of high life."

The end of March found him at Mukden, then the headquarters of Marshal Oyama, whom he sketches in an appreciative and sympathetic spirit. "One would never imagine

Portrait sketch by Willard Straight

that this simple, friendly old gentleman," he says, "was the commander of 450,000 of his countrymen. So kindly, so absolutely unassuming. He did not have much to say. He seemed pleased when I asked him when he would move his headquarters to Harbin, but did not answer. He was a soldier, not a politician." On April 3rd, he had a similar interview with General Kuroki. "The General had heard

Straight and a group of his associates in Tokyo during the Russo-Japanese war. Martin Egan on the right

that I was in town and would be glad to see me. Collins and I called therefore and wandered across over the muddy stream that ran through the centre of the town, to the headquarters building. Here, as in Mukden, everything was quiet, no bustle. An aide called us in and we were ushered into the presence of the victor of the Yalu. He was very kindly and simple. There was little said save the usual run of questions. The General was comfortable. He liked campaigning—would he go to Harbin? Maybe after a long time, one could not fight all the time, you know. He puffed tentatively at a cigarette, laughed a great deal, smiled and let us bear the weight of the conversation. The General did give me permission to come in and sketch him at any time. He wore the simple black field uniform and a pair of heavy felt fur-edged Chinese slippers. His room was wide and the kang divided by partitions. On one side

was a rough steel bed. An overcoat hanging on the brown wall, two or three pairs of boots nearby."

On April 7th, Willard left Mukden with General Pershing, who was attached to the Japanese Army as military observer, to join the First Army, which had been pursuing the Russians further north. They proceeded along the line of the Russian retreat to Tiehling.

"The gay camp life, of clanking spurs and gaudy uniforms, hard drinking, wine, women and song had gone. Now the little soldiers, smiling, unsociable, were in the place of the big and bearded moujiks. Reason approved, but one's sense of the picturesque, of the traditional life of a great camp, the whole panorama picture of this ideal Oriental city under an invader, yearned for the day of the Russians, its wickedness, its debauch. These little men were too serious, too methodical to be attractive. It was so prosaic.

"Yet there was the other side. That night when Itami, a Captain in the 10th Divisional Staff, came to call upon us in the Russian house where we had been quartered, well fed and staked by the military, he gave us the strange feeling of poetry and valor, simplicity and vanity that characterize the Japanese. He talked of the homeland and the cherry blossoms, how he had written a poem before the battle, that the cherry, the valor of Japan, which had been budding, was now to bloom, and he added—'The fruit shall come from Harbin.' He had promised his wife that he would not return until he had reached Harbin. He showed us a precious package of pressed cherry blossoms, fragrant, wrapped in delicate paper, and with it another package, a white lilac, yellow and withered, that had been given him by a Russian prisoner, a common soldier, whom

they had captured in January. He had examined the man's letters and found this, asked for and received it. The lilac from a quiet lane in Southern Russia, sent out to the soldier sweetheart. The cherry blossom from Tokyo, from a little tree in a stone paved courtyard, a black haired babe on a servant's back watching the mother cull the fragrant blossoms that would go to the soldier father among the Manchurian Hills."

April 22nd, 1905. "Back from Mukden and the front. At Liaoyang I met the redoubtable Ricalton. For twenty years he told me he had been principal of a school near Orange and then had suddenly started taking pictures for a Macallister stereopticon view company. He went all over the world for them. There was scarcely a country on the map that he had not done three times at least. Everywhere and anywhere, this old man had gone. Dried and weazened, unclean almost, he had at the age of fifty started out to gratify his appetite for travel and to take pictures. India and the tiger hunts, Ceylon and the elephant drives, the Boxer campaign, the Philippines, wherever there were pictures there was Ricalton. He had stood the Port Arthur show better than any of the rest, up and down the hills like a chamois, wherever his old legs would carry him and the Japanese would let him go, Mr. Ricalton had gone. Nerve, he had of iron. He didn't know what fear was. What he wanted was pictures."

April 26th, 1905. "Back in Peking again. Much the same as ever, with a few architectural changes and many new people. The I. G. seemed to me to have aged somewhat in the last year. He was kindly as ever, a little inclined to talk about his age and his years of service—how he had been out now long enough and wanted to go home, 'On leave' of

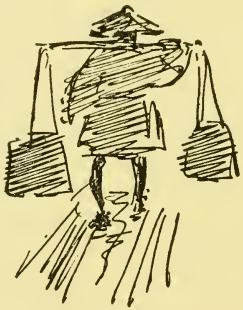
Sketches of Japanese boatmen by Willard Straight

course, but for good, really. The old I. G. told of his sisters, etc., and how he wanted to go to Heaven via London. The Empress Dowager had answered his request for leave by saying that he was acclimatized and would be ill, if he went home. He was only a paper weight anyway, he said, to hold down the bits which any wind might stir."

Willard's return to Peking was an indication of another change in his plans and outlook. While the war was not entirely over, the military operations had come to an end. Peace negotiations were soon to follow, and he had decided, no matter whether they were or were not successful, to abandon journalism and to seek an executive job. The President had appointed Edward Morgan as Minister to Korea in March 1905, and the new Minister offered to Willard the position of private secretary. Willard had accepted. In addition to being private secretary, he was also commissioned Vice-Consul at Seoul, which gave him an independent standing in the American diplomatic service.

Early in May he returned to Japan via Newchwang and Dalny. He remained in Japan for some weeks waiting for his new chief to arrive. It was the end of June when they reached Seoul. So ended his dip into journalism. It had lasted about fifteen months. It had enormously increased the scope and the accuracy of his knowledge about the Far East. He had watched closely and even intimately the behavior of the people who conducted the business and politics of that part of the world, and the experience enabled him to place current events in an illuminating background of national history, purposes and character. If the war had not come and he had not scrutinized its political and international complexion from the inside, he might have taken years to acquire a knowledge of the Far East as

deep, as inclusive and as real as that which under peculiar conditions he acquired in a few months. He had used his work as correspondent to acquire a liberal education in Far Eastern affairs. It brought out his ability to ride on the tide of great events and to extract from them that part of their meaning which was important for him.



CHAPTER VI

THE MURDER OF A NATION

HIS years of observation, reporting and schooling in China and Japan prepared Willard Straight for his main line of work. But it was not until he reached Seoul as Vice-Consul and Secretary to the American Minister that he began to discover what his work was. He became a partly responsible official agent of his own country in a land which was in sore need of his country's assistance. He passed for the first time from the position of student, reporter or onlooker to that of participant in the events which were taking place around him. His participation did not amount to much. His position was humble and brought small responsibility or opportunity for the display of personal initiative. But it enabled him to see in detail and to understand every aspect of an illuminating tragi-comedy of Far Eastern politics, and one which anticipated on a small scale the far more serious catastrophe which was threatening the ancient and honorable civilization of China.

The party arrived in Seoul late in June. It consisted of the Minister, Mr. Morgan, Willard and Arthur Dixey. The last named was a graduate of the Harvard Law School who wished to enlarge his experience and outlook before settling down to the practice of his profession. He is described as " a man who in many ways resembled Willard, artistic, intelligent and personally attractive." Almost immediately they had an audience with the Emperor which was different from similar functions at other courts.

Willard was late in dressing. "Luckily I got in. By making the coolies run, a most undignified thing for the Rising Young Diplomat on his first sight of Royalty, I was past the startled sentry folk before the rest had been able to get well inside the door and brought up a very bad last with my face dripping. I bowed my way in past the Lord High Chamberlain and all the Generals of the Korean Army of which, as it is mostly Generals, there were a good many. That was done and then we waited. Dixey was the greatest thing you ever saw. He was clad in the white coat and heaven blue breeks of the Boston Cadets. You might have thought Dixey was a Lieutenant Colonel but he was not. He was only a high private and was clad as such. Of course, though, he had a sword. That was borrowed from the British Legation. He had found a belt that the Captain of the Marine Guard had been wise enough to have on hand and thus arrayed he went into the Palace. Morgan was also clad in gold clothes, a heritage from St. Petersburg where the secretaries are obliged to wear a uniform. Paddock and I were in evening dress. The Koreans were much impressed by the fine turn-out and the Baby Prince—the Omelette, as he is called, being the son of Lady Om, the Number One Concubine—could not take his eyes off the brilliant Dixey and the Marine Officer was jealous. After much to do we were ushered into the Imperial Presence. The Emperor and the Crown Prince and the Chief Eunuch had draped themselves tastefully around a table at one side of the room and behind them stood the Chamberlains and Ministers of the Household. The Emperor had on the mourning dress of grass cloth and was capped by one of the little winged things that you see in the old Chinese pictures giving court scenes in the time of the Mings. He seemed

very much interested in everything, particularly in Dixey's uniform. Mr. Morgan gave him an autographed letter from the President which contained a lot of hot air and which I had been holding with both hands—all swaddled in

Sketch of a Korean by Willard Straight

Imperial Yellow Silk and tied with a fine silk cord. The Emperor dawdled with the letter and sniggered at Mr. Morgan. The Crown Prince drooled and smiled foolishly. Then the Emperor got hold of the President's letter and looked that over, Morgan talking on in the meantime and the rest of us standing at attention." After a few questions and answers they bowed themselves out.

The Legation was next door to the Palace and when they

reached their own yard, they looked back and saw "the Emperor on his side porch rubbering over." Straight writes a few days later to another correspondent. "I am trying to learn how the thing works. It is such an absolutely foolish country that I find it hard to realize what really serious and epoch making things are going on all about me. The Palace is just next door. It's rather attractive, you know, to have a really truly Emperor as a near neighbor, where you can look over and see the Chambermaids emptying things. The Jiblits, himself, occasionally comes out on his side piazza, and looks to see what the Japanese gardener is about. Then if there happens to be any noise at all that might suggest something unusual, the small Prince is held up on eunuch arms and allowed to peer over. All through the night, when the Korean government works and plots, there are queer people in wonderful, gauze gowns and foolish top hats and long coats who wander about in full view of the people sitting on our verandah. Come over and have a peep at Royalty."

They were scarcely settled in the Legation, however, before they were overtaken by a most distressing calamity. Arthur Dixey died unexpectedly and under conditions which were peculiarly afflicting to his companions. He and Willard came down with dysentery at the same time. A few days before they had incautiously drunk some water which was not boiled but which, they were assured, came from a perfectly safe spring. Willard was up and out again in a few days. But Dixey did not recuperate. He could not sleep and became increasingly nervous. He died at the end of a few days, being devotedly nursed by Willard. The latter was so prostrated by the shock that Mr. Morgan, on the excuse of employing him for the pur-

chase of Chinese ponies and some necessary household supplies, sent him to Shanghai for rest and recuperation.

After he returned from Shanghai towards the end of August, the routine of official duties at the Legation was disturbed by two pleasant interludes, both of which had indirect effects on Willard's subsequent life. One of these interludes consisted in a visit to Seoul by E. H. Harriman and his family. They lived at the Legation and Willard accompanied them to Fusan on the return journey in order to assure their comfort. As a result of the meeting, Mr. Harriman acquired a knowledge of Willard and an interest in him which later secured for him the backing which he needed to launch the great project of his life. The other interlude consisted in a visit from Miss Alice Roosevelt and suite—the suite containing Congressman (now Speaker) Gillette, Senator and Mrs. Newlands, Nicholas Longworth, Miss Mabel Boardman and Miss Amy Macmillan.

Sept. 17th, 1905. "As the Emperor is making a great play for American sympathy, he has decided to let Miss Roosevelt use the Ship of State. Tommy Koen, American, ex-oiler on a tramp steamer and now Engineer of the Palace, with a slight knowledge of the English language, one of the vocabularies that needs combing every morning, was appointed as Imperial Equerry and Master of Horse and told off to greet the Princess at the station. Koen having spent his life on the bounding wave knew all about horses or anything else that rocked. He went to the stables and found a pair of blacks. There were only three pair left. All the others that had been purchased by His Majesty at the time he thought he was going to have a jubilee, but didn't because the Crown Prince had smallpox and because all the Imperial funds had

been lavished in preparations therefore, so that they had nothing left with which to carry out the main program, had been eaten by hungry stablemen. Mr. Koen took out the blacks and one of the two Imperial coaches, and paraded through the city followed by buglers. These were to be used on the day of Miss Roosevelt's arrival and he wanted to get the horses into shape. There were beautiful red uniforms and liveries. They selected three or four men who had been to Shanghai or somewhere and who thought they knew something about driving. But when they tried on the uniforms they found that it was no go and so had to find other coachmen and footmen whom the liveries would fit. Yesterday I went out and snapshotted the outfit for His Majesty. The scheme was to have a squad of Korean cavalry escort Miss Roosevelt to the Legation, the Korean army to be lined up along the route and fire salutes as she passed. But Paddock stopped that, because the Korean cavalry can only stick on by hanging on to the pommels of their saddles and at any

Sketch of a Manchu woman by Willard Straight

function are always sure to fall off, while their ponies invariably run away. Thus are we deprived of the special circus parade. It's really a shame, for it would have been the greatest thing of its kind that even the Emperor of Korea ever perpetrated. Koen will be disconsolate for he had counted much on saying to Miss Roosevelt 'I done it.' "

"The Roosevelt party," he writes to Frederick Palmer on October 3rd, "came, saw and conquered. They had audiences with His Majesty of all the Koreas, and were treated with more consideration than has ever been shown to visiting royalty before. At the first luncheon the Emperor brought Miss Roosevelt in on his arm and sat at the same table with her. The Crown Prince also officiated at a plate and another Imperial figurehead, Yi Yong, was among those present. The rest of us were at smaller tables sandwiched in with prominent Korean officials, many of whom had by special order of the Emperor got themselves into European clothes for the first time and who certainly did look, and from their appearance feel, like Hell. Their clothes were long and short and anything but what they should have been. It was a strange and wonderful sight to see Miss Roosevelt on the Emperor's arm, or rather he on hers, as they came into the banqueting hall which looked more like a boarding house parlor than anything else. We had a Korean chow. The Senator burned his face by leaving his spoon too near the charcoal heart of the soup plate. They gave us all little silver cups, with a gold one for Miss Roosevelt. Besides the luncheon there were tiffins at the East Palace, a fine old park away on the other side of the city. Miss Roosevelt had luncheon with the Palace ladies, which again was an innovation, and one night the Korean Military Band came in. There were about fifty pieces all

told and they made the weirdest and most awesome noise I ever heard—shrieks and the tumming of tom toms, the shrill notes of the flute and the rolling of a base horn. Then the kisangs, the Korean dancing girls, did their stunts in the courtyard.

"The most interesting part of the visit was the part which the Japanese played therein. From the time the party arrived in Chemulpo, and even before, they tried their dirty work. In the first place they attempted to put every obstacle in the way of Miss Roosevelt's having the use of the Imperial car. Then there were many other incidents. . . . I don't think the Japanese imagined we were making any political play though they may have thought so. I am more inclined to think that they were principally afraid of the effect that the visit would have on the Koreans. These people are seeking for straws just now and the Roosevelt trip looked like a life preserver to their jaundiced imaginations. This the Japanese tried to get around by appearing to be doing the entertaining themselves. Naturally they couldn't work any game of that sort, but their actions were such that any feelings that I may have had before are much more so. The littleness of it all—not feeling strong enough even to let this poor people, whom, as Baron Kaneko says, they are going to regard and treat as an inferior race, have their own little party."

The reference at the end of this account to Japanese policy in Korea at that time concerns, of course, the business which was demanding most of the attention of Minister Morgan and his assistants. They were accredited to a government which was being slowly but steadily strangled, and which, while they were looking on, went through the convulsions of a painful death. It was a distressing and

pitiful spectacle even though the men whose rule was being overthrown had richly deserved their downfall. It was particularly distressing to a kindly American. In their foolish agony the Korean rulers appealed to the American diplomats in Seoul as the representatives of the only Power which might come to their assistance. In one of its treaties with Korea, the American government had promised to it a vague and meaningless moral protection. The American Minister had no authority to translate this promise into substantial assistance, but a humane man could not witness the brutal and squalid drama without feeling deeply the barbarism of a world in which the independence of an inoffensive, feeble and uneducated people could be extinguished with such unscrupulous violence.

Even before Minister Morgan had arrived in Seoul, the Japanese government had indicated its intention of suppressing Korean independence. It had already raised the question of having the Foreign Legations withdrawn from Seoul and thus of securing the recognition by the Powers of a Japanese protectorate. The Koreans had violently objected and for the moment the matter was dropped, but the Japanese were only biding their time. For many years the foreign policy of Korea had consisted in playing off Japan against Russia and in maintaining a precarious independence by fomenting quarrels among her exploiters. The Japanese had decided to forestall the revival of this policy by preventing the return of a Russian representative to Seoul. But the least troublesome way in which they could prevent the return of a Russian representative to Seoul was to get rid of all the Foreign Legations at the Korean capital. They must extinguish Korea in so far as her existence depended on diplomatic recognition by the other Powers.

Sketch of Sir John McLeavy Brown by Willard Straight

They were in a position, if they pleased, to insist upon the attainment of this result. Korea was already occupied by Japanese soldiers and was helpless. Russia was disqualified from protesting. The other Powers considered Korea to be the ripe fruit of Japanese victory and were not disposed to offer serious objections.

Photographs of Miss Roosevelt and her party during their visit to Korea in September 1905

The chief obstacle was Japan's own promises. Japan in the treaty with Korea at the outbreak of the war with Russia had agreed to respect the independence of Korea and the continued existence of its Imperial dynasty. But the Japanese for reasons satisfactory to themselves did not attach much importance to the promise. The very document in which the promise was entered took away in substance the independence of Korea and submitted her affairs to Japanese control. From the Japanese point of view Korea was paying the penalty for her mistake in allowing Russia to intrigue for so long at Seoul against the interests of Japan. She must submit to being overruled by the Japanese government. If she were not so overruled, her government would repeat its intrigues against Japan just

as soon as opportunity offered. The Koreans were alleged to be a cowardly, corrupt, inefficient, frivolous and tyrannical nation which could advance no authentic claim to the goodwill and the assistance of other peoples.

According to the moral standards which controlled international action in 1905 there was no answer to such arguments. Japan had fought the war in part to force Russia out of Korea and she could not feel sure that Russia would stay out unless she assumed control herself. A disinterested government such as the United States which was disposed to object involved itself in an impossible dilemma. It could not reasonably ask Japan to let Korea alone without proposing some method of protecting Japanese interests against Korean hostility and intrigue; and it could not protect Japanese interests without exercising an amount of influence upon the shifty Korean government which could only result from the will and the ability, if necessary, to fall back on coercion. A disinterested Power, that is, which contemplated interference must be ready and willing to compel both Korea and Japan to behave. There was no Power or group of Powers in the world at that time which possessed large enough interests in Korea or sufficient conviction about the reign of law and order in international affairs to consider intervention at such a cost.

Yet although the behavior of Japan was either excusable or irremediable under the prevailing international code, it was impossible for a humane onlooker like Willard Straight to watch the actual murder of a helpless nation without waxing indignant at its brutality. He did watch it during his Vice-Consulship in Korea, and he has left an illuminating record of the story. It is worth summarizing both because of the effect which the experience had upon

his subsequent enterprises in China and because of the lesson which the incident contains for Americans. It is their business more than that of any other people to take care that the Japanese government shall not repeat in the case of China its strangling of Korean independence.

On June 22nd, 1905, immediately after his arrival in Seoul, he entered the following note in his diary: "There is one thing I want to do and that is to give people some idea of what the Japanese occupation of Korea really means. The thing that must be done is to unbluff the world." The discrepancy between the actual facts of Japanese penetration and the reasons by which it was defended disgusted him. "Here we have a nation," he says, "whose independence and integrity and the maintenance of whose dynasty was guaranteed in solemn convention eighteen months ago, cringeing and afraid under the heels of an invader. Russia in Manchuria, Good God! Japan has appealed to the great interests of human progress, has boasted of her enlightenment and the world has swallowed it all. Russia spoke of Christianizing the Chinese, of the fulfillment of her destiny, and the world laughed in scorn. Why one and not the other? Have the Japanese sent missionaries to educate and care for the Koreans? Do they encourage them to trade? Do they make ports such as Dalny—that they may profit, it is true, but that the natives as well may reap a harvest? Who profited by the Russian railway, by the opening of Harbin? China, not the Russians. To them it was a vast expense with little return. Who profits by the Fusan line, the Wiju extension? Who is to reap the harvest in Manchuria? Not the foreigners surely—not the exponents of the Open Door. Never. Japan. Under the guise of waging a war for the

A Japanese housemaid by Willard Straight

preservation of her national existence, she has carried on a war of aggression. Is there any difference in the attitude of the Japanese in Chemulpo and that of the Russians at Newchwang? Do you hear fewer complaints from British and Americans? No. Assuredly not. Were Russians flocking into Manchuria, bargaining the Chinese out of land and trade, following the army everywhere with a flock of small traders who were preparing to take the bread from the natives' mouths? The Japanese are doing this in Manchuria today."

Yet Willard's resentment against Japanese aggression does not blind his eyes to the treacherous imbecility of the Korean government. "Where the Japanese would fight and the Chinaman resist with his impassive obstinacy, the Korean will beg an issue by duplicity and double dealing. They are the cleverest intriguers in the East. The Emperor

has for ten years been playing one Power against another. He has flirted alternately with Russian and Japanese. Within three weeks after the murder of the Queen, when he had taken refuge in the Russian Legation, he was in correspondence with the Japanese, from whom, as the murderers of his consort, he was ostensibly trying to escape. During the past year, while fawning before the Japanese and sending representatives to congratulate the Mikado on his victories on land and sea, he has been in constant touch with the Russian agents in Shanghai. In Seoul itself his policy has been to set one Japanese against the other, the military against the diplomatic, the officials in Korea against their superiors in Japan. Marquis Ito was sent by the Mikado in March 1904 to pacify the Emperor with time. The Ministers refused to grant the privilege. The Korean ruler, flattered by this attention, thought that at last he had found a man whom he could use. Since that time he has frequently requested that the Marquis be sent to Korea as Supreme Adviser."

July 15th, 1905. "The Japanese have for some time past been attempting to secure the rights of coastwise navigation and of free entry into all inland waters. This the Koreans have resisted. The matter came to a crisis yesterday and the Japanese Minister made his demand for the third or fourth time. The Ministers refused to grant the privilege. The Japanese insisted that a definite answer be given sometime within the next few days. The Ministers said that their answer was definite and the matter was referred to the Emperor. He evidently more or less tried to smooth things over and his interference resulted in the resignations of all three men aforementioned."

Later. "The situation at present is extremely grave. The

Ministry has been forced to resign through the machinations of Yi Yong Yik, and tired of the plots and counter plots with which the air has been full for the past few days, the Japanese have refused to receive any Koreans whatsoever. The Cabinet after many stormy meetings and an obstinate resistance in the face of the Japanese representations consented to grant to the Japanese, and of course under the most favored nation clause to the other treaty powers, the privilege of free navigation in the interior waters of Korea and the right to engage in the coastwise trade. Yi had used this, as he would have used any other convenient pretext, to force the Cabinet out of office. The Cabinet did resist the Japanese as long as their courage held good. Their principal argument against granting the privilege has been their desire to limit as much as possible the area easily accessible to the low-class Japanese who have been making so much trouble along the Railways.

"Any substitution of honest men for the present type of Cabinet officer would be looked upon with disfavor not only by the Emperor but by certain Japanese. Instead of wishing to give Korea and the Korean people the benefits of a good government, they prefer to allow the present state of affairs to go from bad to worse so that they may be at some future date the more justified in assuming complete control. Moreover there are certain men among the Japanese officials who have advocated and are still advocating a most radical policy. These men would be capable of instigating serious internal troubles in Korea in order that Japan in quelling such disturbances might secure a more absolute domination."

Oct. 9th, 1905. "I sat next McLeavy Brown at Jordan's (the English Minister's) dinner. Brown had much to say.

He is bitter against the Japanese and quite willing that the many facts which he knows with regard to them be circulated. We touched first on the withdrawal of the Legations from Seoul. That of course is uppermost in the thoughts of all at present. Hayashi's recent recommendation to his Emperor that a Protectorate be declared as the only means of effectualizing Japan's policy in Korea had been followed by his recall unquestionably for consultation with Komura as to the best policy to pursue. Brown thought that the Japanese would have great difficulty in stopping Russian intrigue. A Consul General or Agent of any sort could make quite as much trouble as a Minister. It was only the question of a small loss of face and that would have little influence with the Koreans who would flock immediately to the other side. That the Russians could make a great deal of trouble he did not question. The Japanese could always stop it but they would have to use force. He thought that they were strangely reluctant in deciding to take any radical steps. They cherish a strange reverence for the Imperial person. They may bully him and try to force him to take certain measures which he detests, but they have no desire to harm him, unless it be absolutely necessary. They would like to corner him and by drawing his teeth, which would simply mean depriving him of his superfluous funds, reduce his mischief making capacity to a minimum.

"Speaking of the Emperor's privy purse Brown said that his revenues now were very large. After the China-Japan war everything had been taken from him, but little by little he got it back. His first step was to send out messengers through the country when the tax collectors had completed their first round and seize a certain amount of their collec-

tion. For this receipts were given which the Treasury was ordered by edict to accept as so much cash. His efforts always seem to have been directed toward securing as much as possible of the public funds to devote to his own purposes. Robbing his own till was his favorite pastime. The Household Department used to sell the privilege of reed cutting along the foreshores sometimes half a dozen times and let the people fight it out among themselves. The private nickel coining was notorious; selling monopolies and profitable offices brought in a good deal; all waste lands were worth something. The money was invariably frittered away to buy off someone, to get hold of the refugees in Japan, to build some foolish thing or other. When Speyer and Alexieff were at the height of their power they tried to oust Brown, but were unsuccessful. Brown at that time had charge of the Treasury. The Emperor used to send him messages telling him that he couldn't sleep because of his worry that the Russians would force his dismissal. What could he do? 'Say No,' suggested Brown, knowing that that was the one thing that the Emperor could not do. Brown had the key to the Treasury, and whenever the Koreans came for money he refused them unless their case was a good one. The Russians, whose policy it was to let them do all the foolishness which they could conceive of, told them to go ahead and take as much as they wanted to. This pleased the Koreans so they went at it. They took a hundred husky coolies and went away laden with one hundred cases each containing two thousand silver yen. This money was taken into the Palace and there the Emperor howled with joy. It is reported that he danced about the silver boxes crooning with pleasure, and I can easily imagine him squealing to himself with the eunuchs standing around

The Imperial palace in Seoul

with their tongues hanging out thinking how much of it would eventually find its way into their clothes. His Majesty bestowed a large fistful on the principal thief and more to the others, then all the servants came forward with outstretched hands begging for their share. They all had it and when they were through no one knew what had become of the money.

"He had much to say about the murdered Queen. How it was estimated that she had altogether put to death or had killed some nine thousand people, generally on the suggestion of one of the Palace sorcerers who wished to get hold of the property of the person they impeached. He spoke about the life in the Russian Legation, how the Emperor and the Crown Prince found their principal pleasure in piling wood in the big Russian stove. How Yi Pon Chim, present Minister to Russia, had jumped over a wall and

was a little lame, walking with a stick, and was generally full of the champagne which the Russians at this time gave free to all the court. He made such a nuisance of himself around the house that Mrs. Weber, to get rid of him finally had him appointed Minister to Washington."

Early in November the Japanese government granted the Emperor's request and sent Marquis Ito to Seoul on a special mission the nature of which the Emperor did not like. "Matters came to a crisis," reports Mr. Morgan, Willard's chief, in November 1905, "when Prince Ito, with a large suite, visited Seoul and took the first steps toward the extinction of the Korean Empire. The night upon which the Emperor was induced to agree to the preliminary changes leading to annexation was an agitated one for us. Foreseeing what was about to occur, the Emperor requested permission to take refuge in the Legation, in order to avoid compliance with the exactions of the Prince. A dramatic situation might have been precipitated which, interesting as it would have been for us, would have interfered with the plans of Washington and Tokyo. In spite of repeated messages for assistance, we were unable to do more than avow to His Majesty that his personal safety was assured. There were great comings and goings. Japanese artillery patrolled the streets, and troops were stationed outside the Palace. It was during the early morning hours, after a sleepless night on our part, engaged as we were in observing the course of events, that the matter was finally settled and Korea ceased to be an independent Power."

On November 14th, Willard writes, "Marquis Ito has arrived in Korea. For a week we have been having rumors of all sorts about his mission and the Koreans are as usual in a blue funk. Some time ago they made a bluff at want-

ing to take advantage of a clause in our treaty with them which provides that in case they are oppressed by a third power the government of the United States must use its good offices, whatever those are, to arrange an amicable settlement. The Emperor tried, when Senator Newlands and Miss Roosevelt were here, to get us to do something. His idea, of course, was some sort of backstairs proceeding such as he used with the Russians and with the Japanese in the good old days when he was balancing one Power against the other. He hasn't the nerve to deal with the situation directly. He's afraid that if he were to come out openly and say that the Japanese were maltreating his countrymen, as they certainly are, the W. L. P. would raise the devil with them, as they certainly would. So he does the other thing. He sends a special embassy to Tokyo congratulating the Mikado on the successful termination of the war on the one hand, and a secret agent to the American Legation, not to mention the half dozen that have gone to America and to Europe, on the other, to complain of Japanese atrocities. He has spent at least fifty thousand dollars in financing a lot of irresponsible damn fools who have started out to save Korea and work their own graft to the limit. . . . The Emperor was advised by the Senator to engage the services of an international lawyer and to make a dignified protest. This didn't please him and nothing more was said until two days ago when he sent in word that he had a letter that he wanted sent to the President. Morgan refused to have anything to do with it. Ito had arrived and the chances were ten to one that in the same breath he had sent a message to the Japanese saying that they could have anything they wanted. That would be his game. Then he'd sit on the side lines and see us fight it out."

Nov. 15th, 1905. "Ito after being put off for three days had another audience with the Emperor today. He went in at three. There were a large number of Japanese gendarmes as his escort and they waited around outside the Palace gates, smoking and chattering in the crowd of ill-fed Koreans, soldier folk and the usual muddle of rickshaw men and chair bearers. He stayed until after six and, as Nam reports, made the following proposals: (1) That there should be Japanese superintendents in the Palace. (2) That there should be these men also at the open ports. (3) That Korea should withdraw her Legations abroad. (4) That all Korean diplomatic business, treaty making, etc., should be done by the Japanese Foreign Office. The Emperor, true to his character, begged the issue. He said that Hayashi and Pak Che Som would have to discuss these things. His action means that Pak, who is after all a good man, loses at all turns of the game. If he holds out, as he will be instructed to do, then when the Japanese complain to the Emperor, His Majesty will blame him. If he yields, as he will, for the Japanese can bring so much pressure to bear, he will be dismissed and his action disowned. It looks as if matters were coming to a showdown."

Nov. 17th, 1905. "The drama began to move apace today. Yesterday there had been Japanese troops marching to and fro all day and today there were more of them. On the main street leading to the old Palace half a regiment of artillery, 3 batteries with 18 guns were manoeuvring, dashing to and fro, unlimbering their pieces. Infantry detachments, all of them, seemed to pass this point. One battalion went through an open order drill with bayonet rushes just opposite the Korean barracks, and when I went out at half past four the street was full of excited people with an

unusually large number of Japanese police and gendarmes about.

"This morning at eleven, the Korean Cabinet was called in. The three Yi's were quite willing to do anything the Japanese suggested. Pak Che Som, the Foreign Minister, and the Premier refused, left the room and said they would die rather than yield. In the early afternoon Hayashi went to the Palace. The Emperor had, of course, previously said that Pak and Hayashi were to settle matters. The Japanese Minister announced that he would not leave until the agreement was signed. He was accompanied by Hagiwara. When I went to the club at 6.30 there were large numbers of Japanese gendarmes and policemen with lanterns outside the Palace, also the rickshaws of some of the Japanese, of their Ministers, I suppose. I arranged with Koen that he was to telephone if anything happened. As I sat with my teacher a call came in from him and I went over immediately. There I found Pak, formerly Secretary to Washington, and Colonel Hyun, formerly magistrate at Yengben. He had a message to Mr. Morgan from H. M. Nam didn't dare come in to the Legation. H. M. wanted advice. What should he do? He was sick, really sick, and the inhuman Japanese insisted on seeing him. It was really too harsh. What could Mr. Morgan do for him? How could he put them off temporarily? That was the point—'temporarily.' The Japanese made these tremendous demands. They couldn't yield. H. M. couldn't see them in any case, but they threatened to go into his sick room and force him to sign.

"I told them that Mr. Morgan could not advise them without first consulting the State Department. That they realized, but what would he suggest? I then went over

A Korean in a straw rain-coat

again the facts of their representations to Senator Newlands and his advice to make a direct appeal. Mr. Morgan had invariably suggested that they follow this advice, but they had not heeded. Then Pak said that H. M. had finally consented when Marquis Ito came. I told him that that was too late. He realized that or said he did. What could they do now? I told them that there were three courses: (1) To refuse absolutely and take the consequences. (2) To accept conditionally and under protest, reserving the right to protest to foreign nations, and (3) To yield and make the best conditions possible. The last I assured them would be Mr. Morgan's advice. They had let the time go by for protesting. This they were not willing to admit. As they insisted, I conveyed the message to the Minister. Hassegawa's carriage was now outside the gate and the gendarmes and police stared at us as we went by. I told Mr. Morgan what I had said and then returned with his reply. The Colonel had gone and Pak was there to argue. He suggested that even if it was too late, H. M. might call in the foreign representatives and lay his case before them. Surely they couldn't refuse to send such a communication home. On this point I told him I could give him no information but was strongly of the opinion that the foreign representatives would not go to any

audience. If they did they might refuse, in view of the tardy date of the protest, to send it to their governments, and even if they consented to that, the governments had probably been communicated with beforehand and would probably pay no attention. In this case they would be worse off than ever, for a rebuff such as Korea would expose herself to by referring the matter to Europe and the U. S. would constitute a proof of isolation which the Japanese would be quick to take advantage of. He thought that it would be best to refuse absolutely. In this I gave him no encouragement, although my personal feelings were very much in favor of such action. I told him that I thought it would be foolish, for they would lose all. Instead of being a protected state they would be absolutely under Japanese rule. The Emperor would receive no consideration, nor would anyone else. It would be playing into the hands of the Japanese military. Pak was laboring under the delusion that the Foreign Powers might take pity and intervene. This I told him I doubted. Korea had had a ten year chance to improve, and neither Emperor nor officials had shown the slightest inclination to take advantage of it. He continued to argue from the patriotic standpoint. He left,

A Korean watching a parade
by Willard Straight

assuring me that the Ministers would die rather than yield. At 11:40 Pak telephoned that all the Ministers had yielded. That H. M. and the Premier alone held out and that the seals had been sent for. At 1:00 A. M. I am still waiting for developments."

Nov. 18th, 1905. "At half past one I went out for a stroll around the compound. There was a rattling of rickshaws and I went below and on looking over the wall saw that the Japanese were going away. Hassegawa's carriage had already gone. I could see that the Palace compound was full of Japanese policemen and gendarmes. At first I was doubtful about the nationality of the former, although their lanterns were unmistakable. Then I saw that their overcoat buttons were of brass and knew at once who they were. The gendarmes one could not mistake. Koreans in their court dress and Japanese were fluttering to and fro, but little was said. It seemed impossible, as I stood there in the moonlight behind the hedge, that the fate of a nation had been sealed within fifty yards of where I stood, that an independent Empire of 12,000,000 people had subjected themselves to bullying and exploitation without a struggle. Yet the Ministers had signed. If they hadn't the Japanese would not have left the Palace. Then I turned in. The next morning Yak the interpreter came in with tears in his eyes, and a strange and wonderful cold sweat on his nose, and wept—'They did it.' 'Did what,' I asked. 'Signed the papers,' he answered. All the Ministers except Han Kin Sul, the Prime Minister, and his friend, the Minister of Agriculture, had signed. Pak, the foreign minister, had telephoned to the keeper of the Seals that a Japanese was coming for them, and that he must give them up. There were all manner of rumors of the way in which the signa-

tures were secured, the Koreans as usual care little for the consequences of their deeds if they can 'save their faces' and explain to themselves that their weakness was really wisdom, their yielding a necessity, or better still, that they didn't yield but were tricked merely. One man says that Hayashi was explaining the situation to them, telling them of their corruption, their inability to stand alone, the hopelessness of their government. They said, 'Yes, all this is so, but —' 'No,' Hayashi cried, 'there are no buts, you have yielded.' Thereupon one of his Secretaries wrote their 'Yes' in after their names, and they had yielded. Yak claims that his friend said nothing and therefore did not yield. All accounts are agreed that the Prime Minister stood out. It is said that when the other Ministers were going to yield, he had pleaded a headache and left the room, gone into His Majesty's presence, smashed his official hat and started out. He had been followed by Kokubi and two officers who missed him, but he was turned back by the Japanese gendarmes behind the Palace. This story comes from the Japanese as well."

Nov. 25th, 1905. "Tonight as we sat smoking after dinner, Morgan and I, not knowing what to do exactly, a telegram came in from the Department.

'In view of the recent convention between Japan and Korea by which Japan becomes medium for conducting foreign relations of Korea, the representation of the United States in diplomatic matters affecting American rights of treaty, persons and property in Korea is transferred to the American Legation at Tokyo, such questions to be dealt with through channel of the Japanese Foreign Office. You are accordingly instructed to withdraw from Korea and return to the United States leaving premises, Legation

Drawing by Willard Straight of a scene in Seoul during April, 1904

property and archives in custody of United States Consul General whose functions as Secretary of Legation ceases. Root.' "

Nov. 30th, 1905. "The morning before Ito left, Tsuzuki came in to see Morgan, ostensibly to tell him that the Marquis had instructed Hassegawa to express his hope that Mr. Morgan was under no false impression that there had been a show of force in the Palace. This he repeated several times. Mr. Morgan assured him that he was quite certain that H. E.'s efforts had been attended with the greatest success. Again Tsuzuki came at him, again Morgan countered. Finally Tsuzuki talked of kakemonos and at last as he was going away again said that he hoped he could assure the Marquis that Mr. Morgan was certain that no improper means had been used to obtain the concession. Mr. Morgan remarked that he could assure His Excellency that he believed that his mission had been most successful. The idea of their trying to put up such an evident and palpable bluff!

"Min Yong Whan, the man with whom I dined when Senator Newlands was here and who would not listen to reason about the proper course for his country to pursue—Min Yong Whan bade farewell to the crowd of officials, whose head he had become since the arrest of Chyo at about twelve. He then went to the house of a retainer and having a room prepared sat down on the floor and drove a knife into his throat, ripped it forward and killed himself. He was a man of almost royal blood, who could approach the Emperor as no one else could. A cousin of the murdered Queen, he had been special Ambassador to the Queen's jubilee and to the coronation of the Czar, ex-Prime Minister, ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, and a nice gentlemanly fellow much liked by foreigners and, as much as any

Korean could be, a popular idol. He had money and position, everything to live for. The Japanese, although they opposed his recent appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs, could not and would not have injured him. I remember perfectly well the morning he came here to plead with Newlands, the night we dined with him, but then he wouldn't do the direct thing and make an appeal to the President in a dignified way. It didn't appeal to the Korean intellect. Yet he was very graceful and had much charm of personality, as have many of the Koreans of the higher classes.

"I went down to the center of the city to learn of Min's death. Here around the square there were dense crowds, orderly they seemed, but muttering. Such a hopeless, inane lot you never saw. They have no determination, no nerve, nothing to recommend them. They were talking in groups. One of the main buildings had been burned the night before. It was still smoking. Japanese police were everywhere making the people move on. I went in to the buildings where the officials had been sitting the day before. Then came home. At half past four the electric light people who have offices in the centre of the city telephoned that the Japanese were firing on the crowd. I piled on to my pony and made for the place as quickly as possible. There I found several hundred infantrymen with fixed bayonets, some picketed along the streets which were being cleared by police and gendarmes, others in platoon formation waiting orders. It seems that a man named Yi was haranguing the crowd about the death of Min and that the Japanese in trying to shut him up drew blood. Yi then shrieked that he could not suffer such an indignity, he who was an official, and killed himself on the street. The crowd

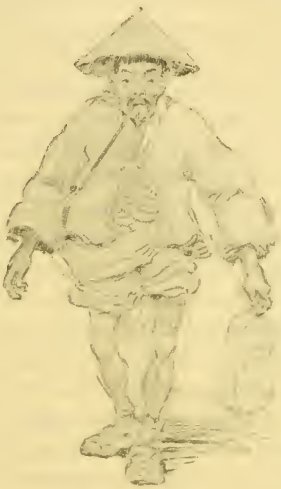
started for the gendarmes and drove them into their quarters on the main street. Some say that two were stoned and killed, others that they were only severely wounded. In any case the Japanese rallied and came out firing over the heads of the crowd with revolvers and carbines. When I arrived on the scene the Japanese were chasing the Koreans like a lot of rabbits, smashing in houses and dragging them out by the hair, binding them and, under guard of two or three gendarmes, taking them off bound in gangs. They didn't seem unnecessarily brutal however. The whole community is excited about the withdrawal of the Legation. When they have had so many complaints against the Japanese occupation it will, because of the withdrawal, be harder for them in the future to secure a hearing. They feel universally that they have been betrayed. So they have. It may not be the fault of any one in particular, but certainly because of our treaty they have looked upon the United States as a friend to whom they could turn. It has been to us that they have made their hopeless, footless appeals in the past few months. They all realized that the Legations would go, I think, and that their country was turned over, but it came as a cruel blow that the United States should have been the first to take such a step. It is claimed, and I believe that it is true, that Min's suicide was largely due to the withdrawal of our Legation. He had hoped against hope that we could and would help them.

"Two days ago, Brown and Sir John Jordan went away. Now the little Chinese Minister, a clever devil, being afraid that he would lose face if Morgan left before he did, has suddenly announced on twelve hours' notice that he's off. It may be that he has been called to Peking for consultation over the Manchurian demands of Japan. I don't know.

The American Legation in Seoul in October 1905, with Mr. E. V. Morgan and Willard Straight in the foreground

In any case he's off too. Morgan leaves for Japan on Wednesday of next week. The German Minister goes in a month. The Italian has already gone. I follow Morgan in a fortnight and go home with him. It is like the stampede of rats from a sinking ship. Almost all the foreigners are going, Customs and Legations, only a few broken-hearted missionaries left. Their case is the most pitiable of all. Here they are, forsaken by their governments, the Legations which mean much to them gone, the people for whom they have worked, over whose troubles they have wept, with whom they have rejoiced, whose life has been their life, borne down by the weight of a national calamity. The missionaries, not trusting the Japanese, feel that with the withdrawal of their Legation they will lose the protection of their interests which even in the past has in some cases

not been sufficient to secure them impartial treatment. They know that the Koreans themselves feel that they have been betrayed, and that their converts will, many of them, turn from the Church, convinced that the comfort and con-



Sketch by Willard Straight of a Korean coolie

solation which they sought within its sanctuary had been denied them. It's really pitiful."

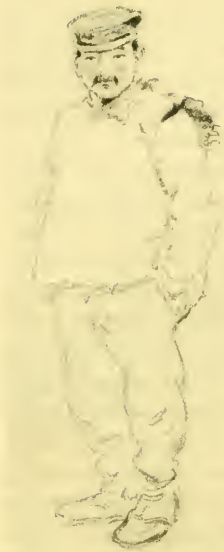
The foregoing account of the strangulation of Korean independence was written by a man who was in a position to know the facts, who was a shrewd and careful observer and who had no axe to grind in setting down the story. It may not be the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He was writing hurriedly in the midst of exciting events; he

was obliged to rely partly on hearsay evidence; and he did not have time scrupulously to corroborate or to qualify his statements. But it gives on the whole a fair and vivid account of the way in which the Korean government was forced to cut its own throat and in so far as it is true it does not make pleasant reading for Americans. Here was a nation of some 12,000,000 people, for whose intercourse with the outside world Americans were particularly responsible. The American government had signed a treaty in 1882 with the Korean government in which it promised, whenever Korean independence was threatened by a third Power, to use its "good offices" on behalf of Korea. When that treaty was signed the Koreans had Japan chiefly in mind. Years passed. Japan became a great nation which fought a successful war against Russia for the political and economic domination of north-eastern China. Conflicting interests in Korea did much to bring the war about, and it was obvious that the victorious Power would expect to dominate Korea. But the Japanese government, whatever its ultimate aims, was extremely anxious to earn the good opinion of the world. At the outbreak of the war it promised in return for an alliance with Korea to respect the Korean monarchy and Korean independence.

What happened? The war being over, Japan presented demands to the Korean government which were destructive of Korean independence and which gave to Japanese nationals an extremely privileged economic and political position in that country. The Korean government was at a loss what to do. It could no longer play one exploiting nation against the other. There was only one effective centre of power in north-eastern China. Japan possessed the military and naval power to do anything she pleased to Korea.

The mistress of the seas, the British Empire, was the ally of Japan. Korea had no chance of survival unless she could secure the assistance of a disinterested country like the United States or unless the public opinion of the world would effectively express itself and scare Japan into moderation. The Korean government, remembering its treaty with the United States, turned naturally to the nearest Americans and appealed for advice and assistance. They advised a formal and public appeal against Japanese aggression, but those to whom the advice was given shrank from accepting it. The Korean officials were afraid to venture out into the open as the enemies of Japan because, if their appeal failed, they would suffer for their failure at the hands of their oppressors. So they hesitated until the last moment. They were placed in a position which obliged them to choose between political murder and suicide.

But surely in their agony they had some reason to feel aggrieved at the discrepancy between what the American government had promised to do, whenever a third Power threatened their independence, and what it actually did. The intentions of Japan and the threat to Korean national independence were notorious. We had promised to use our "good offices" to protect Korea. We had promised, that is, at the very least to intercede by verbal inquiry and representations on behalf of the threatened independence of that country. Doubtless it was a foolish promise. Verbal intercession which was not backed by threat of force would have been ineffectual and would doubtless have exposed the American government to a humiliating diplomatic rebuff. Yet it would have had some advantages. A protest, even if verbal, would have saved this country from converting one of its treaties into a scrap of paper; it would have called



Sketch of a Japanese soldier in Korea by Willard Straight

the attention of the world to precisely what Japan was doing; and it might have encouraged the Koreans to refuse their signature to the treaty of November 17th. As it was, the American government not only remained silent, but it was the first to announce the withdrawal of its Legation from Seoul and so to acknowledge the extinction of Korean independence. It was no wonder that a patriotic Korean, like Min Yong Whan, brooded over such a flagrant desertion and committed suicide.

If the American government had recognized the plain threat to Korean independence and raised the question with Japan, it would have placed the Japanese government in an extremely embarrassing position. Japan had repeatedly pledged itself to respect Korean independence. The public sympathy of the American government might have encouraged the Koreans definitely and unequivocally to refuse. In that contingency Japan might have fallen back in the case of Korea on the same dilatory tactics it subsequently adopted in China. The Koreans had something to gain and, as it proved, nothing to lose from resistance. By consenting they did not, as

Willard urged, save themselves from the ultimately complete loss of independence, whereas they did enable the Japanese government to pretend that the Koreans had consented to their own national extinction. The formal legality of the Japanese action has passed unchallenged, in spite of the fact that she obtained the signatures to the treaty of November 17th by fraud and force.

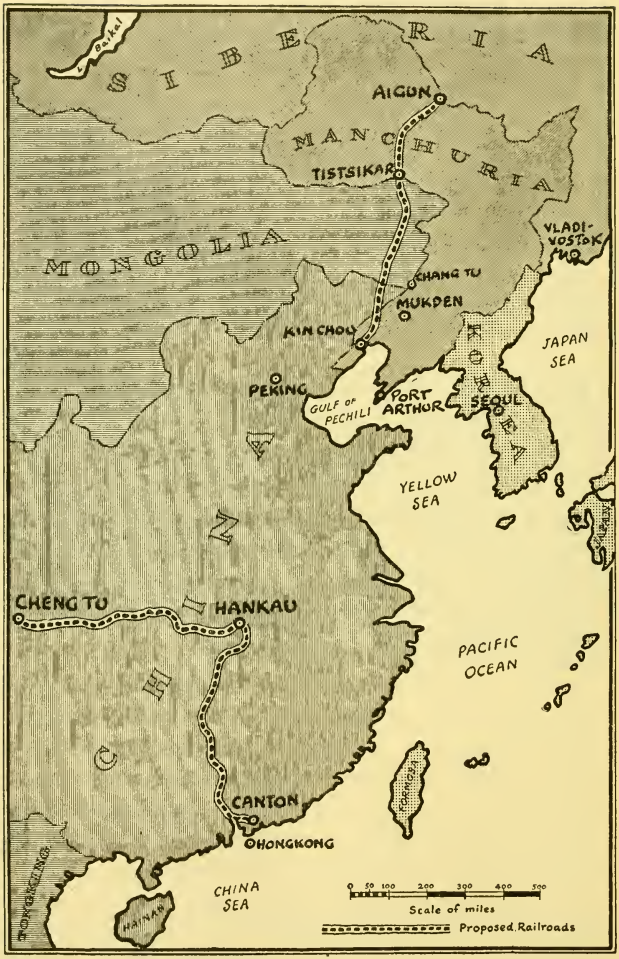
The obvious and orthodox answer to this indictment is formidable. Why encourage the Koreans to a resistance which would have resulted in future bloodshed and suffering? The Korean Empire did not deserve to survive. It was steeped in frivolity and corruption. Its rulers were too cowardly to adopt a frank policy and to make a public appeal to the President to use his "good offices" for their protection. When in desperation they consented to a frank appeal, the American Minister considered it too late. Japan had excellent reasons for insisting once and for all on doing away with a government which was in effect a permanent conspiracy against the well-being both of Japan and Korea.

All this is true, but is it sufficient? The Korean officials had some excuse for fearing to appeal publicly to the President. They had lived in a world of international intrigue, duplicity and coercion, in which promises were made not for the purpose of being kept but for the purpose of saving moral face or accomplishing some ulterior object. They may have considered the promise made by the American government to be of that kind. An American protest would in all probability only have delayed their strangulation, and they wanted to get it, if they were to get it at all, as cheap as they could. Their cowardice and chicanery were a necessary part of the whole miserable mess. They are to blame for it in precisely the same sense that the American

nation is to blame for uttering promises which it does not keep and for cherishing the illusion that it represents high moral standards in international affairs chiefly because it remembers its fine utterances and forgets its failure to keep them. There is no way out of the mess until some nation which possesses the inclination, the interest and the power to exploit another nation refuses to plead that the interest of civilization requires it to use that power, or until some nation or group of nations conspires not to take advantage of the moral, political and economic weakness of a country like Korea, but to educate it in the art of political self-government.

It is in my opinion a great pity Korea did not resist. No matter how abortive the resistance, it would have helped to redeem on the part of the Koreans their past political failures. By suffering and, if necessary, dying for their independence they would have done something to deserve it and to give future vitality to Korean nationality. Their sacrifices might have been vain if politics in the Far East had continued to be a matter of an unscrupulous competition for power. But there was at least a chance that their sacrifices would not have been vain. For China presented to Japan, to America and to the European Powers a problem analogous to that of Korea but on a far vaster scale. Because it was so vast and populous, the appropriation of its resources and the destruction of its independence would take a much longer time. America and Europe possessed interests in China which they could not allow Japan to override, and out of the adjustment or the clash of these interests with those of Japan there might arise a new machinery and code for dealing with an immediately helpless but latently powerful people which would ultimately react in favor of Korea.

At any rate now that Japan had taken over Korea and Korea had become for the time being a problem of digestion rather than of swallowing, China began to occupy the exclusive attention of the politicians of the Far East. The war between Japan and Russia had involved the possession of Manchuria no less than that of Korea. The Japanese victory had not resulted in the complete extinction of Russian influence in Manchuria as it had in Korea, but it had enormously increased the area of Japanese influence and its opportunity for future growth. Japan as an imperialist, expansive, aggressive nation would naturally seek to repeat in Manchuria, and so far as possible in other parts of China, the strategy and tactics which had proved so successful in Korea. A man whom the Japanese policy in Korea had stirred to indignation and who was much more interested in China than in Korea would naturally wish for an opportunity to remain on the spot, watch the development of Japanese imperialism in the larger field and, if possible, do something to protect China. That was the way Willard Straight felt. Fortunately the opportunity of acting on his wish was not long delayed; and the bravest and most stirring adventure in his life soon began.


Baikal
SIBERIA
AIGUN
MANCHURIA
TISTSIKAR
VLADI-
VOSTOK
MONGOLIA
CHANG TU
MUKDEN
KIN CHOU
JAPAN
SEA
PEKING
GULF OF
PECHILI
PORT
ARTHUR
SEOUL
YELLOW
SEA
CHINA
CHENG TU
HANKAU
PACIFIC
OCEAN
CANTON
HONGKONG
CHINA
SEA
HAINAN
0 50 100 200 300 400 500
Scale of miles
Proposed Railroads

CHAPTER VII

THE FRONTIER OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

A FEW days after the State Department withdrew the American Legation from Seoul, the President appointed Edward Morgan to a vacancy which had just occurred in the legation at Havana. The new Minister to Cuba immediately offered to Willard the same position of private secretary which he had occupied in Korea. Willard hesitated about accepting. He was reluctant to leave the Far East—so reluctant that he wrote to Sir Robert Hart and applied for a position in the Imperial Maritime Customs. But nothing came of the application. He decided finally to accept Mr. Morgan's offer and to return with him to the United States en route for Cuba. But by returning to the United States he was in his own mind far from abandoning his intention of building his career in the Far East. His letters prove that he hoped to resume his work in China as soon as an opportunity offered. Neither can there be any doubt as to his intention, if possible and necessary, of making for himself the opportunity.

Willard Straight sailed from Yokohama about the middle of January 1906. Early in the following October he was back in China. What happened in the meantime is summarized by Mr. E. V. Morgan in the following words: "After spending a few weeks in Japan, Willard and I proceeded to the United States, arriving in Washington just previous to the marriage of Alice Roosevelt and Nicholas Longworth. They had indicated their desire to pass their

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, Mr. E. V. Morgan and Willard Straight during the visit of the former to Cuba early in 1906

honeymoon in Cuba, so closely associated with Mr. Roosevelt's participation in the Spanish-American War. The American government did not then own a Legation building in Havana, and if the 'Princess Royal' was to be properly housed the new Minister had to provide a suitable lodging.

"Without waiting for the marriage ceremony Willard

went to Cuba, and in an incredibly short time secured the Quinta Hidalgo at Marianao, which I occupied during the entire four years of my official appointment. This house was unfurnished, but with the assistance of the famous Donna Pilar of the Hotel Telegrafo sufficient furniture was obtained to make it habitable. Servants were engaged, and three days after the wedding, Alice, Nick, Willard and myself were installed in the Quinta. We afterwards accompanied the bridal pair on their triumphal progress through the Island and, under the direction of the Manager of the Spanish-American Iron Mines who had been the guide of the Rough-riders, rode on horseback over the historical trail from Diqueri to Santiago. Willard remained with me in Havana until we went to the United States in the following summer, after which he was appointed Consul-General to Mukden."

How he obtained the appointment to Mukden is not entirely clear. His diary is silent. He abandoned the writing of it from the middle of January 1906 until his return to China. His correspondence reveals the state of mind in which he accepted the appointment rather than the history of how he obtained it. On June 18th, 1906, he wrote from Havana to a college friend, Henry Schoellkopf, "I've been wired congratulations as Consul-General at Mukden, though whether it's true or not I don't yet know. Carr, Chief of the Consular Bureau, wrote me a few days ago that I should probably be sent to Tsingtau, which as you know is the German port in the East. I fancy the Manchurian job for many reasons, however. First and foremost it's a Consulate General, and also it's at Mukden that the biggest game in the East, save Peking itself, is being played. The Lord knows that Tsingtau is a summer's day compared

to the incipient cyclone that is hovering over North China. I am rather startled, as you may well imagine, and the knees of me wobble somewhat, for it's a responsibility which I dread although it's a chance I've longed for. In any case the road runs pretty straight and there are no more side paths for Willie. There's a chance for the making and, as always, one for the breaking, but as you said when you wanted to see the war, 'you'd like to find out.' Everybody likes to find out. Most people are lucky if they do it themselves and are not found out."

Edwin Morgan states that his appointment was "partially due" to Edward Harriman. No doubt this is true. Mr. Harriman for reasons which will appear later, needed to have a man like Willard Straight scouting for him in Manchuria. But Mr. Harriman was not at that time on confidential terms with President Roosevelt and his influence alone is not sufficient to explain the assignment. Probably Willard himself contributed as much to his appointment as did Mr. Harriman. He habitually looked forward to the next step in his career and usually planned it. He was not satisfied with such a tame job as that of private secretary and had accepted it again only with reluctance. He was eager to return to China and if he was to go to China he preferred Manchuria. He had warm friends, members of the President's own family, who were in a position to submit his excellent qualifications for the appointment to the President.

The assistance of these friends was probably decisive in his appointment, which, there is reason to believe, originated not with the Secretary of State nor any subordinate in the Department but with President Roosevelt himself. It was one of Mr. Roosevelt's most winning qualities that he was

He who perpetually guarded the gate of Straight's picturesque house in Peking

always looking out for promising young men, and that when he spotted them he put tact, imagination and generosity into his subsequent relations to them. He discovered Willard Straight in the summer of 1906 and soon became his friend and helper. Willard talked with the President more than once during his sojourn in the United States. He paid a visit to Oyster Bay and discussed with his host his own ambitions and the opportunities which China offered to young Americans. A deep affection and admiration for his new chief dates from this summer. He always recognized a debt of personal gratitude to Mr. Roosevelt, some part of which could only have been incurred on the occasion of his appointment to Mukden.

Accompanied by Nelson Fairchild as Vice Consul-General, he sailed from New York on August 28th. He writes to Henry Schoellkopf from the steamer about his months at home in the following words: "The United States in retrospect is a funny place. Within three weeks I will almost have forgotten that I have ever left the Golden East and will be back in the old rut without a whimper. One impression stands clear among a great many confused notions of things in general. It is an exceedingly difficult thing to keep a steady course when the needle is deflected at almost every turn by all manner of magnets. It is difficult to come out satisfactorily where the life is a jump-to-jump relation with people of all sorts and kinds—that is, with any feeling save one of confusion and uncertainty and a desire to go and hide in a place where it is quiet and cool." He was thoroughly convinced that the clear and steady course for him was to get away from the temptations and distractions of the kind of work he was doing and the kind of life he was leading in Havana or Washington and to return to

surroundings in which a man with initiative and enterprise would count more quickly and on behalf of larger ends.

Willard Straight and Nelson Fairchild arrived in Mukden on October 3rd, 1906. They went out via London, St. Petersburg, Moscow, the Trans-Siberian Railroad and Harbin. They selected this route at the suggestion of President Roosevelt, who wanted a trustworthy report on political, military and economic conditions in Russia, Siberia and Northern Manchuria. The journey occupied some five weeks. Between the end of the Russian railroad south of Harbin and the beginning of the Japanese railroad they travelled some forty miles by cart, which proved to be a disagreeable and fatiguing experience. When Willard reached Mukden he was so exhausted that he ran a fever for some days, but with sufficient rest and good food he soon recovered. Once he was on his feet, he threw himself into the work of his new office with his accustomed energy.

That work consisted in establishing an American Consulate in the capital city of a remote Chinese province, which had only recently been opened up for foreign trade. Manchuria was a comparatively unknown country except to Russians and Japanese, and it was only since the end of the Russo-Japanese war that foreigners, Russians excepted, were offered opportunities of trading in the interior of the province. The situation of Manchuria was peculiar in this respect. In other parts of China the "treaty ports"—that is, the cities in which foreigners may reside and establish permanent business bases—are situated only on the seacoast or on the banks of a great navigable stream. The Chinese had permitted very few cities in the interior to become centres of foreign trade. But in Manchuria there were at this time eighteen open cities of which only two,

Newchwang and Antung, were accessible from the sea. Japan was responsible for the opening up of sixteen of these cities. Willard Straight's appointment as Consul-General at Mukden was the first step taken by the American government to place consular agencies at the service of the American traders in this region.

A preliminary matter which occupied much of Willard Straight's time was the difficulty first of finding and then of equipping an appropriate building for the Consulate. Until the spring of 1907 he and his assistants occupied a few rooms in a forlorn Chinese hotel. In the meanwhile he was searching with all his habitual energy for an official residence which would come up to his high standard of propriety. A man of a different disposition and personal needs might have put up with almost anything which was not too inconvenient and insignificant. But how and where he lived both as an individual and as Consul-General of the United States made an enormous difference to Willard. As the American representative among a people who were easily impressed by the scenery of position and power he craved a residence of some dignity and comeliness. As a man who was sensitive to the atmosphere of his own surroundings he needed a habitation in which he could live agreeably and entertain generously. The American Consulate in Mukden was his first domestic establishment. The interest which he showed in choosing an appropriate building and subsequently in altering it into a pleasant and decorous residence was an expression of one of his own fundamental instincts. His life, if it was to be satisfactory to him, must unfold itself in surroundings which enhanced rather than ignored or discouraged its characteristic impulses.

Finally in March 1907 he found a residence which measured up to his requirements. It was a former Viceroy's memorial temple which had recently been occupied by Japanese soldiers. It consisted of a series of buildings grouped around a court and situated to the west of the city outside the mud walls and about two hundred yards north of the main road to the station. It lacked, of course, all the conveniences to which Americans are accustomed in their houses. In spite of many alterations, the buildings were never adequately equipped for comfort, and during the long and severe Manchurian winter they were particularly trying. But they were spacious, attractive, characteristic and dignified. He obtained from the Department of State an allowance of some 3500 yen for their alteration. It was all that he asked for at the time, and he did a great deal with the money at his disposal to increase the habitability of his templed home. But there remained many additional improvements which he would have liked to make and which he was persistently recommending to the Department. He was tempted to pay for these improvements out of his own moderate funds and he sometimes yielded to the temptation with the result of getting himself into financial difficulties.

These and similar matters of minor business occupied a large part of Willard Straight's time during the whole of his consulorship in Mukden. He was conscientious and indefatigable in the transaction of his official duties. He liked to work. He was frequently discovered pounding away on his typewriter at two o'clock in the morning. One of his clerks reports that he put in sixteen hours out of the twenty-four in business of one kind or another. But the reader must not infer that he was occupying himself during the whole of the sixteen hours with the dull routine of Consular detail.

On the contrary, he was occupied a large part of the time in outlining large financial, diplomatic and political enterprises and in contriving ways, in spite of the fact that he himself was only a consular agent, to launch them on the troubled waters of the Far East, to equip them with the needed motive power and to man them with a trained crew.

The first consulate in Mukden with Willard Straight and C. J. Arnell at the door

He had eagerly sought the Consulship at Mukden because it offered an adventurous and ambitious but obscure man the chance of molding important events and carving out a career. He had every intention of using his office, such as it was, as a means to the building of one of those marble palaces to which his fellow student at Cornell predicted so confidently he would give body.

Willard Straight, Nelson Fairchild, and C. J. Arnell and their Chinese staff at the door of the consulate

As a matter of fact he became one of the few American Consuls who managed to raise his office almost to the eminence of an ambassador and who as an ambassador broke new ground and modified the subsequent relationship between his own country and the government to which he was accredited. Mr. E. Carlton Baker, one of his successors in this office, declares that "his official record at Mukden is unique in the history of the Consular Service." The work of a Consul is usually similar to that of the manager of a small well-established business, who sits in his shop and satisfies the demands of familiar customers. But Willard Straight at Mukden was rather in the position of a man who was starting a new business of huge possible proportions but of a precarious nature and against stubborn but elusive obstacles. The new business was the promotion of American national interests in Northern China. The un-

familiarity of the territory, the novelty of the problems and the lack of achieved experience and organization made it precarious. The two most formidable rivals of America, Russia and Japan, were firmly established on the premises and would not willingly yield anything of importance to a new competitor. They possessed privileges in Manchuria which were not only incompatible with any considerable growth of American influence and trade but which threatened the economic and political independence of China. The agent of the American government in Northern China would, consequently, in asserting the interests of his fellow countrymen to a share in the trade of that region, raise the Chinese question in all its ramifications and perplexities. The principle of the equality of economic opportunity for all nations in China would have to be vindicated, if at all, in Manchuria. The promotion of American interests in that region was even more a matter of politics than of business.

In other parts of China the work of economic and political penetration by foreign powers at China's expense was for the moment comparatively quiescent, but in Manchuria Japan appeared to be repeating the policy of absorption which she had successfully practised in Korea. Situated in Mukden he could see the Japanese policy of penetration in successful action just as clearly as he saw the Japanese police in command of the corridors of the Imperial Palace in Seoul on the night of November 17th, 1905. The Japanese felt then and still feel themselves entitled to Manchuria. They had driven the Russians out of that territory and captured Port Arthur. "They had paid heavily for their victory in blood and treasure. The Japanese politicians and soldiers believed that the nation had bought and paid for the rights in that region which their representatives at Ports-

mouth claimed. It was a bitter disappointment, therefore, when the published terms of the peace made it evident that Japan had only gained about fifty per cent of what she had asked for. In the course of the next two years the Japanese government characteristically remained silent in the face of very serious popular disapproval of the Treaty of Portsmouth. There were no published post mortems, but the Genro just as characteristically set to work to attain in fact a dominating position in Manchuria which China and the other Powers had refused to recognize in principle."

When Willard arrived in Mukden the Japanese government had already begun to use its privileged position in Manchuria to discourage foreign competition. It was steadily consolidating and extending the economic advantages which it had obtained by the Treaty of Portsmouth. The penetration assumed the form of removing all obstacles to the complete possession and the exploitation in its own interest of the means of communication and the essential raw materials. The Russian government had based its original penetration not so much on its lease of the Liaotung Peninsula as upon the railway which it built from Harbin to Dalny, this railway being explained as an attempt to secure for the Trans-Siberian Line an ice-free outlet on the Pacific. At the end of the war Russia retained the railway as far south as Kuangchentzu, but the Japanese took over the line from that place to Dalny together with the extension to Newchwang and Port Arthur, and a narrow-gauge branch line from Mukden to Antung at the mouth of the Yalu River. They also took possession of all the mining properties which the Russians had worked, occupied the buildings and established their own system of posts and telegraphs.

"A steady tide of Japanese immigration had begun to

flow into Manchuria. Willard Straight could see their settlements grow along the railroad, and the Chinese reported rapidly increasing figures in alien population. Korea was proving to be a barren and inhospitable land materially as well as politically. Manchuria was rich in agriculture, in mineral deposits and the vital raw products which Japan needed. It offered vast possibilities in markets for Japanese manufactures and railway exploitation. There was little American trade. With the exception of the ubiquitous Standard Oil Company and the British-American Tobacco Company, no American business of consequence took advantage of the door which Willard Straight proposed to hold open. There were, however, a great many feelers in the shape of trade inquiries, and every mail brought quantities of advertising material printed in English and utterly useless until laboriously translated and adapted to use by the Chinese. But the Japanese were taking no chances of equal opportunities for all. Barred by their treaties from open discrimination they were in a position to discriminate very effectively in practice. Nearly all of the American Consul's foreign mail had to pass through the Japanese post-office before it reached him, and Japanese mail was always given precedence. Important official correspondence from Washington came in sealed pouches, but other mail was repeatedly opened in transit. His consular code was stolen. Shipments of freight over the South Manchurian Railway were almost frankly discriminatory, and competing shipments got held up on docks at way-stations or were missent. Abundant evidences of these practices were on file in the Consulate, corroborated from Newchwang and Antung. American freight frequently arrived in bad shape, and it was difficult to obtain redress for

The entrance to the memorial temple in Mukden which Willard Straight converted into the American consulate

damages. Trademarks were borrowed, altered and appropriated. And most important of all, through our own agents but more emphatically through Chinese sources, he learned of a systematic Japanese trade exploitation of cities and towns reached by the South Manchurian Railroad which were not open to foreign trade."

In spite of the ingenious way in which the Japanese both

disguised and revealed their evident intention of repeating in Manchuria the job which they had practically completed in Korea, Willard was not discouraged. There was one important difference between the two cases. Japan was only beginning the process of appropriating Manchuria. There was still a fighting chance of checking her domination of that region and of preserving what remained of Chinese authority and of economic opportunity for the citizens of other nations. The young American Consul-General at Mukden prepared almost single-handed to make the fight. All that was most real and vivid in his personal experience in the Far East and all that was most chivalrous and adventurous in his mind and character conspired to urge him on. Mounted though he appeared to be on a crazy little pony and armed with a lath for a sword and a reed for a lance, he was not afraid to enter the lists against the dragon of Japanese imperialism. He became for some years a man with a mission.

I shall be occupied hereafter chiefly in telling the story of this mission, what its beginnings were, how it matured in his mind and in the world, what became of it and what it deserved by way of success. But unfortunately in recording this part of Willard Straight's life I cannot act, as I have in the past, merely or chiefly as the editor of his own written reports. He did, indeed, resume his diary as soon as he arrived at Mukden, and it remains a useful source of information about the incidents of his life. But it ceases to throw much light on his plans, his experiences or the working of his mind. The impressionable novice, fresh from provincial New York but with wonderful memories and anticipations of the Far East, has vanished. Willard no longer tells in his diary of what he sees and hears. He no

longer sets down accounts of the people he meets and repeats the many good yarns which are told to him. He no longer spends any important part of his time in sketching the outstanding aspects of Chinese character. He is now a man with a responsible occupation which absorbs all his energy and around which his observations and records are grouped. His diary degenerates into the jottings of a man of large affairs, preoccupied with the day's work, who uses it to enter useful memoranda.

But with the passing of his diary, his life almost automatically overflows into an equally illuminating record of another kind. He now begins to express partly in action and partly for other people the experiences, the ideas and purposes which during the comparative loneliness of youth he had expressed in drawing and writing for himself. He had gradually throughout his years of experiment and growth in the East created two different but supplementary outlets for his attention. On the one hand he had for himself a real and an important job and on the other he had entered into fast and warm associations and friendships with other men. It is in these more objective ways that his life now unfolds and gets recorded. Letters, documents and communications with intimate friends take the place of a diary as his characteristic vehicles of expression. He continued to keep a diary, but he kept it rather as a future convenience than as an autobiography of his mind and experience.

His letters and the other indications of these activities in partnership possess an exceptional value as records. They reveal to an unusual extent almost his whole mind. He was expressing, as few men express, all there was of him in his work and in his intimate associations with other people.

When he was at his best he was so much all of one piece that these two dominating interests inevitably fused. His most intimate friends were for the most part people with whom he worked; and whenever he worked with a man it was not his fault if the association did not move in the direction of intimacy. Quite apart from his work, he was, of course, attentive and generous in his attitude towards other people. He had a gift for entering into their minds and identifying himself with their occupations, but his interest in others was active and practical rather than analytic or psychological. It was natural, consequently, for his warmest friendships to flower on the stem of an interest shared with the friend in some common occupation. His personal intimacies became more numerous and more important in proportion as his activities became more intense, absorbing and purposeful.

It is a really significant fact in the life of Willard Straight that his new habitation, the temple-compound at Mukden, in which he started his campaign against Japanese imperialism, became at the same time and almost as a consequence of the campaign itself, the headquarters of a personal society of which he was at once the president, the secretary and the leading attraction. The membership in the society consisted in part of the few Europeans who shared with him the privilege of representing in Mukden a foreign business or government. It consisted much more of a number of non-residents whom Willard's personality or activities brought to Mukden, who put up at his house and who thereafter were usually his brothers in affection and in affairs. They came and went; and his association with them, combining as it did the personal and the impersonal, and expressed as it was in letters and in various kinds of

Photograph of Mr. George Marvin, Deputy-Consul General at Mukden

written memorials, becomes from now on a revelation of his life as appropriate and as complete as the private record from which I have already quoted so copiously.

II

We do not have to depend upon occasional second-hand reports for our knowledge of the life which Willard led

with his friends in the Consulate at Mukden. Mr. George Marvin, who went out in July 1907 as Deputy Consul-General and who was his most confidential associate during the following months, has written a full account of the way in which the life in the temple compound looked to his intimates and guests in Mukden, and his account is lively, candid, entertaining and entirely trustworthy.

Mr. Marvin received his first letter from Willard when he was en route to occupy his new post. "It contained a formal welcome and some specific instructions for the trip from Dalny to Mukden. At that time the Japanese were standardizing the gauge of the South Manchurian Railroad, and several bridges, replacing those demolished by the Russians in their retreat a year before, had been washed away by floods. Straight wanted a detailed report, made en route, on the progress of construction, on the approximate mileage rebuilt, on the character of ballast, the condition of bridges and the amount of new rolling stock. He also asked for notes on the quality and quantity of Japanese travel moving northward from the Leased Territory into Chinese Manchuria. Written in his own careful longhand—the neat characters blocked like type on wide-margined pages that afterwards became so familiar—the letter faithfully represented its writer. I was aware of the keen mind of a Consular officer decidedly on the job. And yet, what was more abiding, the formal expressions to a stranger had a distinction and charm super-consular. There all at once at the first contact was Willard Straight, the thoughtfulness, the insistence, the grace that were his. And there stood his main preoccupation during Mukden days—the activities of an encroaching empire in Manchuria.

"A week later, at daybreak on a hot August morning, I found Straight in his temple at Mukden. His boy who had met me at the station, awakened him on our arrival, and he came out across the shadowy court bareheaded, wearing a gray silk kimono, his feet in Japanese sandals. There was no wind blowing that morning, no yellow dust in the air. The sunrise painted the eastern sky bright red. On the parade ground outside the temple, buglers of the Viceroy's new regiments were practising their calls. Every now and then in life, there comes a harmony of things, when the elements of a moment, human and inanimate, are composed by some higher agency as though with a destined propriety. The triumphant dawn over sad brown plains around the old Manchu city, the Oriental temple and Straight, youthful, tall and grave, all belonged inevitably together. It is scarcely possible for the few who knew him in Manchuria to think of Mukden without its brightest spirit, and the thought of Straight, for one at least of his friends, always had—as now it has—a Mukden background.

"The Mukden Consulate in those days was a cross-roads of the East, a caravanserai, a Mecca. And Straight, in addition to his consular duties, was host, guide, counselor, friend and good Samaritan. That first morning was typical of many of those which followed. Breakfast time, four or five hours after our meeting at dawn, discovered a houseful of guests. Major Eben Swift, U. S. A., was living in the temple while making a strategic study of the Battle of Mukden for the War College at Washington. Haskins, Chinese Secretary of the Peking Legation, and Peck, a student interpreter, had come north on semi-official diplomatic "pidgin," and Chandler, U. S. Vice-Consul at Dalny, was en route back to his post. After breakfast Mr. and Mrs.

Willard Straight, George Marvin and a guest seated in the American consulate at Mukden

Stowe-Phelps of Morristown, N. J., dropped in on their way around the world, and later in the morning appeared Professor Blakesley of Worcester, Mass., working up the Far East for future lectures at Clark University.

"That afternoon we rode for the first time 'out to a temple in a deep enchanted forest' (as the entry runs in my diary)—the forest and the Manchu tombs of Pei-ling. And that night—the climax to a long day of vivid impressions—the entire company dined together out of doors in the inner court. The occasion was quite perfect. Hardly any two of us around that table had anything in common—except that we were all conventionally dressed for dinner—but the place and our host subdued the group to temporary accord. Shaded candles glowed over linen and silver and

flowers on a table charmingly arranged on a red rug in the centre of the paved quadrangle. The well-trained boys, in silk brocaded coats and tasselled hats, faded in and out of the shadows noiselessly. And a different moon, the moon of Asia, looked over the temple roofs silhouetting fantastic figures on the eaves and flooding the court with silver magic. We sat for a long time afterwards smoking and talking, each one with that sense of ease and goodwill and attention which was part of the abiding charm of the place, and made people care for it and want to return to it.

"By and by Straight got his guitar and sang for us. He sang unaffectedly and well—his head tilted up in the air and forehead wrinkled—but never so appropriately as there in his temple court which seemed a part of his songs to those of us who first heard them there.

'Last night I dreamed I was a Mandarin—
'Yo-yo-meo, Yo-yo-mea, Yo-yo-meo.'

He had several negro melodies and old Cornell glee club tunes, but best of all were the songs he made of Kipling's verses: Danny Deever, For to Admire and The City of Sleep. During that summer and in the following year there were many other dinners in that same court by moon and candlelight, but most of them are merged together now in a composite memory. This one remains distinct. It was the first.

"People went into Straight's temple with thanksgiving and entered his courts with praise. It was really one of the show places of North China, besides being a kind of sanctuary and a haven where every one would be. The South Manchurian Railroad had a habit of landing people at Mukden at unearthly hours. From Dalny or Harbin guests generally arrived—and departed—at dawn or in the middle

of the night. The Imperial Railways of North China which linked us with Tientsin and Peking were more human, but in those reconstruction days, a year after the Peace of Portsmouth, there was a good deal of dust and dirt and general hardship connected with Manchurian travel in any direction. Approached by the long Russian boulevard from the station, with its many roofs surmounted by a tall white flagpole, the American Consulate loomed across a bare parade ground like a small suburb outside the city walls. The late Viceroy, whose monument it was—and from whose mercenary heirs Straight had secured its lease—had departed recently to his long home. His memorial temple, therefore, was comparatively new and in an excellent state of preservation. Under Straight's orders our fifteen servants kept it cleaner inside and out than any other Chinese dwelling I ever entered.

"Imagine, then, the feelings of the average guest—frozen or boiled according to the season of the year, but always dirty and tired and detrained at what then seemed the jumping-off place—to find himself in a haven of cleanliness and comfort surrounded by the conveniences and small attentions which go with big modern cities. And all of this astonishing well-being discovered in a fantastic oriental setting which neither words nor photographs can adequately represent.

"That part of the big Viceregal compound in which we lived consisted of three successive courts. Through an ornamental gate in the outer wall you entered the first and largest of these in which the central object was a high pylon of granite and wood richly carved and painted. Grotesque stone dogs guarded its abutments, quaint gargoyles clung to its slanting ridgepoles, and under its intricate eaves hung little bells that tinkled with the slightest breeze.

"From this wide ceremonial court you hurdled over the high threshold of the gate-house into a smaller central enclosure; directly across through an aisle of potted plants and flowers, the drawing-room barred its further side; Straight's room flanked it on the right, mine on the left. In the gate-house were two guest rooms. Each of the other rooms was a separate building in itself. Beyond the drawing-room through which it must be reached lay the innermost court, the penetralia, closed on the opposite side by the Viceroy's shrine. It was here that we dined when the weather was clear and warm. On the right of this court stood the dining-room and on the left the best guest room.

"These three successive courts with their constituent 'chien' were built on the same longitudinal axis, so that when, as on the occasion of a big dinner or the periodical ceremony, provided for in the lease, of kowtowing to the Viceroy's dust, the intervening great doors of the gate-house and the drawing-room were flung open, there lay an alluring vista from the outer gate clear through to the innermost shrine, a distance of a hundred yards or so. By day this was impressive enough; by night, with long lines of lanterns stretching through the courts, it became celestial. In other buildings near at hand, but not part of the central axis, were the Consular offices, the 'hoto-batho,' kitchens and stables; and over in the adjoining compound of the Llama priests—pensioners of the dead Viceroy and guardians of his shrine—reached by an arched gateway through the low intervening wall beyond the office, Straight had laid out a very good clay tennis-court. Near one corner of the tennis-court, flanked by colossal beasts of carved stone and dominating our entire village, rose the tall white flagstaff put up in August 1907 and believed to be the highest in North

Willard Straight and a group of friends and visitors on the steps of the temple compound in Mukden

China. The country was so flat around Mukden that you could see the Stars and Stripes of the American Consulate several miles away in any direction.

"Thoroughly in keeping with this Oriental demesne were the retainers who made up its very competent domestic staff and daily, though unconsciously, contributed to the

humor of life in Manchuria. The entire household looks quizzically out of an old 1907 photograph pasted in my diary. Not counting the suave Mr. Kao, our Chinese writer, nor the 'barber by special appointment to Their Excellencies, etc.' nor the little Llama neophytes who in summer pursued tennis balls and ran errands in all seasons, there were fifteen of these worthies in the more or less permanent establishment. Willard had names for some of them. Most important were old 'Clarence' the gateman, who had come with him from the Ma-lin-quan, and 'Chester' the night watchman, neither of whom recognized any hours or limits to his faithful services. No one got by 'Clarence' day or night, though he shrewdly came to recognize a few privileged local characters like Mezger, Oliver or Watson, who might properly be permitted to wander in unannounced. He was the first to wear the Consular shield on his coat, and took enormous pride in his job, which involved admitting Viceroys, Governors and Ministers Plenipotentiary as well as acting as a first line of defence. By some uncanny sense he always knew of our approach—from an afternoon's ride or a prolonged absence—and his familiar blue figure at the gate was part of every homecoming, his hands tucked muff-fashion into his long sleeves and his weather-beaten face, cross-hatched with wrinkles, puckered into a wistful watchfulness.

" 'Chester' was a very big Manchu, well over six feet. Whenever he slept was a mystery, for he was always pottering around on various self-inflicted jobs during the daytime, and in the night it gave an added sense of comfort when you woke to hear old 'Chester' on his rounds rapping on the walls and flagging, with the high club he carried, to scare away evil spirits and cheer up his own. Among the

rest 'William,' originally my boy, came to be most identified with the temple and Straight's subsequent affairs in other years and places. To a rare degree he possessed the quality of unswerving faithfulness. An impediment in his speech had the effect of making his eyes as large as butter-plates with inarticulate explanation. His tall slim figure is woven into memories of Peking, Shanghai, Hongkong and Paris, and he died far from home in the service of his master.

"Mr. Kao, our Chinese writer, belongs in a separate category. He spoke English fluently although with some quaint idioms of his own, entertained official ambitions and took himself generally with great seriousness. Like most Chinese of his class he was efficient in all that he had to do and an indefatigable worker. His position in the American Consulate gave him a great deal of extra 'face' in the Chinese community, and his exits and entrances, with a swish of silken skirts and a flick of his extra long queue, were often the occasion for quiet exchanges of glances between his nominal superiors. From Mr. Kao to the nethermost water-coolie the entire establishment was devoted to Straight, who bore toward them a kind of feudal relationship. He was the overlord and master, uncompromising but fair, rewarding them in various ways for services which money could not buy.

"At that time Willard was less than thirty years old. His colleagues and competitors, the officials of the government to which he was accredited, his friends and associates, without exception, were older than he in years, but his was the initiative, the leadership. Surrounded by mediocrity, tempted by easier ways and worn by routine, he dreamed the dreams of a young man and saw the visions of maturity.

He impressed all with whom he came in contact by his winning personality, and by his force of character commanded their respect.

"From widely divergent and prejudiced points of view his integrity was tacitly acknowledged. With Hsu-Shih-Chang (then Viceroy of Manchuria and later President of China) and Tang-Shao-Yi, constantly besieged by concession hunters, facing official pressure from British, French and German interests and threatened by the Japanese, he was persona gratissima, because he so faithfully represented the bona fides of his own government which China was then coming to recognize as her only friend in the international scramble. But beyond this official relationship there were many evidences of warm personal intimacy between the Chinese officials and their youngest, most intelligent and amusing foreign associate. He alone among the Consuls at Mukden spoke Mandarin and knew and loved things Chinese.

"The Russians, rueful but not passive, and greatly intrigued with the importance they attached to a growing American-Japanese irritation, saw in Straight the representative of a new order in the Far East. Their own Consular establishment, disorderly socially and officially, was the complete reverse of his, but while wondering at his punctiliousness they did not resent it. With the German and British representatives he remained on terms of comradeship which were mutually appreciated. It seems strange now to think of an American, German and Englishman fraternizing on the most intimate terms, discussing with the greatest frankness their respective interests, troubles and theories. Although of different nationalities, Mezger, Fulford, Willis, Oliver and Watson, Straight's colleagues and

From left to right, Fulford, the British consul in Mukden; Kato, the Japanese consul; Willard Straight and Mezger, the German consul

friends, all spoke the same human language. With the Japanese it was another matter. During the entire time of his Mukden Consulship Willard remained a thorn in the flesh of Dai Nippon.

"There remained, outside of his official relations, a small foreign community which recognized in Straight's temple and in his personality a kind of general safeguard or reassurance. The English and Scotch missionaries came to him with their troubles and their plans and found him always sympathetic and helpful. The pioneer tradespeople who adventured into Central Manchuria also recognized in him a keen advocate and a helpful influence. Many of our neighbors felt themselves to be cut off from what they called civilization and rather succumbed to a self-imposed exile. Willard's drawing-room was lined with bookshelves regularly replenished with new publications; he subscribed

to several newspapers and magazines which did not come to us free through the Consular mail. Printed news from home reached us generally from a month to six weeks after publication, but through his subscriptions to the English newspapers published in the China and Japan coast ports, we kept apace with the times only a week or so behind the cable.

"This leadership so generally acknowledged, and the atmosphere of intelligence, wide interest and refinement he had managed to create in so short a time, made life in the temple extraordinarily keen and interesting. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that there was no better talk in China. The conversation never degenerated into mere personalities of the commercial traveller type of stories. Remember that we lived in the China of the Empire. The Empress Dowager was then the great inscrutable personality of the Orient. Mystery was undispelled; the Forbidden City was still forbidden; queues hung down the backs of the Chinese. The echoes of the Russo-Japanese War were still rolling over Manchuria, and rumors of other wars came faintly on the air. There was plenty to talk about. And the people from Mukden and the ends of the earth who came to sit about Straight's table and blow the smoke of his Havana cigars up into the painted rafters of his drawing-room knew what they were talking about. Wonderful tales they unravelled, facts far wilder and stranger and more alluring than fiction, and one had the added interest of knowing that each narrator was a doer or a seer of the things whereof he spoke. There was little or nothing of the second-hand. Almost everyone in those days who sojourned in our Consular hotel had a hopeful adventurous interest in life and in one another. Among them all there was no in-

terest more vivid, no mind keener, no figure more striking than this boy's who was their host.

"There was always a strong sense of the dramatic in much that Willard did, and in Manchuria in those days the dramatic was normal. He loved ceremony. He made little ceremonies out of flag-raisings, dinners, toasts, the arrival and departure of guests. The decanter of port must always circulate around the dinner table from right to left, and even at informal luncheons he personally arranged the seating beforehand. He was unhappy if the less important of two people occupied the right hand place in a carriage or motor-car. In Mukden nothing was synchronized, but Willard was almost invariably late in reaching functions and equally invariably arrived with éclat and was promptly forgiven on arrival.

"Had this trait been merely a love of show it would have proved a weakness. It was instead an evidence of strength. He was by right of rank and seniority of residence Dean of the Consular Corps. He insisted on the forms and the prerogatives which went with the office of American Consul-General in China; when they happened to be disagreeable he did not shirk them any more than he shirked the responsibilities of the office. Sometimes he 'rode in triumph through Persepolis' but far more often, and with equal devotion, he maintained his dignity in a derelict drosky or shouldered the wearisome burdens and services he might easily have avoided. And then behind the high value he placed on appearances there was always the deep feeling he had about right living.

"In a place such as Mukden was fourteen years ago little things counted in morale. The tendency was to compromise, to grow careless, to slump. Straight did not so much over-

The forest of Pei-ling in the neighborhood of Mukden

come his oriental environment as to bring it into agreement with his own standards. In principle he conceded nothing. Our life was robust enough. We met the rest on even terms with a live-and-let-live attitude. There were roaring nights

and adventurous days, but always a fine fiber running through the weave of personalities which was Straight's contribution. I can't remember that he ever took a censorious or critical attitude toward his neighbors and associates, but by the force of a consistent example he carried more weight and exerted more influence than would have been possible by any amount of preaching. It was a quiet insistence, flavored with a saving grace of humor. Whether we had guests or not, we always dressed for dinner at Mukden, summer or winter, and there was no difference in the deportment of the house servants no matter who was present. Straight believed in keeping as physically fit as the climate and the onerous official and social duties of his position would permit. Some form of exercise was part of every Mukden day.

"Generally we rode. In the temple stables were four oat-fed ponies—'Mable,' 'Willie,' 'Cranreuch' and 'Nikko,' named by Straight without regard to sex, and all of them grays. In the warm weather there was a good deal of tennis. We introduced in Manchuria what we were pleased to call 'polo,' making up in zeal what we lacked in skill. Sometimes we took long walks or runs. (This latter form of diversion convincing some of the neighbors that we really were crazy). We sent to Shanghai for boxing gloves and started sparring on rainy afternoons, but as these encounters broke up so much furniture and tended to loss or impairment of Consular face, they were eventually abandoned. When nothing else would do we fell back upon the 'Sandow' chest weights bought in Tientsin and installed in my room. Riding brought by far the happiest results, winding by tracks in kaoliang fields to distant little hills, through the always wonderful nocturnal city and often to Pei-ling.

"That sense of unreality which haunts life in China brooded over Pei-ling. There, far away was near. Through the still pine groves and aisles of the Manchu tombs, tended with priest-like care, stirred an influence felt and acknowledged by different kinds of beings. Straight often spoke of this. Life at Mukden, as elsewhere, was made up of elements commonplace and banal enough, but once we had ridden across the downs into the Manchu forest, it often assumed a quality of dream."

Another associate and friend of Willard's in Mukden, Mr. Nils Blix, who represented the Imperial Maritime Customs in that city, supplies additional testimony to the extraordinary pains and ingenuity which he expended in the expression of his affection for his friends. Blix recalls particularly a Christmas dinner which Willard gave in December 1907. "It had," he reports, "snowed heavily during the day, so that by 7 o'clock in the evening the roads were difficult to travel, but it gave the appropriate touch to the season and made us think of our far-away homes as we jolted along in our Peking carts to the accompaniment of the mules' bells. At the entrance to his house Straight received us in that peculiarly cheery, half-jestful manner which was his own, and then he led us into the sitting room which he had decorated for the occasion. He had transformed the whole room into a miniature forest of pine trees and hung the walls with the various nations' flags and emblems. Colored lanterns provided a soft elusive light and the floor was strewn with cotton wool and pine needles. Under the trees little animals such as hares, birds and the like stuck out their heads. They were all made by Straight personally and added enormously to the verisimilitude of the scene. Within the frame of this decorative landscape

he had placed the Christmas table presided over by a huge Santa Claus. He had painted separate menus for each guest, representing some incident in the life of his friends and he* had also composed verses for the occupant of every chair. Straight, of course, acted as toast-master and he kept a current of fun and good-natured banter running around the table. After dinner he presented the guests with souvenirs, all of them specially designed for their recipients. The evening ended with an improvised concert to the accompaniment of the host's mandolin."

III

A Consul-General who ceases to occupy himself with the official routine of his office and promotes himself into a political representative of his country can scarcely avoid raising delicate and difficult questions about his relationship with official superiors and associates. Mr. George Marvin gives us an interesting account of how Willard in carrying on his fight against Japanese encroachment in Manchuria either obtained the coöperation of his colleagues or, if necessary, partly dispensed with it. "In common with all other Consular officers in China," says Mr. Marvin, "Straight was directly responsible to the Department of State at Washington, and indirectly to the Legation at Peking. Our dispatches to the Department were almost always duplicated to Peking, and generally copies of important informational letters to Mr. Rockhill, then American Minister to China, were sent to Washington. The establishment at Mukden, however, was the most important north of the Great Wall. In that area Straight was the

*It was George Marvin who wrote the verses.

only American Consul-General. But his powers were not defined with sufficient detail to avoid friction or to limit an ambitious conception of his position. During the summer and autumn of 1907, Straight organized and put into operation an effective liaison system linking up all of the

Willard Straight and consular colleagues in Mukden

American Consular establishments in Manchuria with the Mukden office. In order to do this he had to secure the hearty cooperation of the other Consuls, and to act without instructions, or rather in the spirit but beyond the letter of his instructions.

"The results more than justified him. Roger Green, the representative at Dalny in the Leased Territory, was of course primarily responsible to the Embassy at Tokyo, but he at once recognized Straight's plan as strengthening American interests in Manchuria, and on account of his

great liking and admiration for Willard fell in with it intelligently. . . . Fred Fisher, the Consul at Harbin, also saw the advantages of close cooperation and was so stimulated by Willard's keener mind that he too became thenceforward a very useful and loyal ally." The remaining territory was covered by Charles Jonathan Arnell at Antung on the Yalu River, and by Consul Heenan at Newchwang. Arnell needed no additional urging. "He kept us fairly swamped with beautifully written reports, while Mr. Heenan became firmly lashed to Willard's chariot wheels during his short visit to Mukden in October 1907 en route to his new post."

"Unfortunately his relations with the Legation at Peking were not uniformly so successful. Throughout nearly two-thirds of my time in China there existed a distinct difference between the Mukden Consulate and the American Diplomatic Representatives in Peking. This was founded upon a misunderstanding which grew chiefly because of the distance between the two posts. It was entirely removed before Straight left China by the visits of Mr. Rockhill and of Henry P. Fletcher—then First Secretary of the Legation—to Mukden, and by the increasing appreciation in Washington of the value of Straight's efforts and accomplishment. On Willard's arrival he had requested permission from the Legation to proceed to Peking and to talk over with Mr. Rockhill pending questions of American policy in Manchuria. Mr. Rockhill rather peremptorily refused the request. . . . Before he knew Straight's character he rather resented what he took at the long range to be mere officiousness. He was one of the two or three most noted sinologues of his time. He sat cross-legged on the floor and talked with the Dalai Llama of Tibet in his native tongue. . . .

He was an acknowledged master of the old diplomacy of forms and laissez-faire. . . . Yet it was he who first phrased the doctrine of 'The Open Door and Equal Opportunity for All' which John Hays' advocacy established as a cardinal principle of American foreign policy. He was all his life a warm friend of China, but he entirely missed—or rather he did not acknowledge—the constructive commercial possibilities of his office.

"Straight's attitude toward China and especially toward the Manchurian situation was entirely different from that of the American Minister. Mr. Rockhill was content to affirm the doctrine of the 'Open Door'; Straight jeopardized his life and nearly brought about a break in diplomatic relations with Japan by his insistence on maintaining the Door in Manchuria actually open. He saw opportunities for development of American trade in North China and for railway building which Mr. Rockhill ignored. He detected and reported Japanese treaty infringements which were very disturbing in Peking and Washington. So it is easy to understand how for a long time there was a lack of understanding between Mukden and Peking."

In carrying on the fight Willard Straight needed the coöperation not merely of his own official associates and superiors but of the Chinese officials. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to defend the Chinese if they, like the Koreans, did not know how to defend themselves. He was fortunate at the moment in obtaining the needed coöperation. Soon after his arrival in Manchuria the provincial Chinese officials engaged in a series of sharp conflicts with the Japanese government as a consequence of the latter's aggressive policy in North-East China, and in their conduct of these controversies they were embarrassed by

their political organization in Manchuria. They had hitherto conducted in this region the three independent governments of Fengtien, Kirin and Heilung-chiang. The Chinese needed in order to meet the Japanese on more equal terms to consolidate the administration and improve its personnel. This fortunately for Willard Straight they decided and actually started to do.

In June 1907 for the first time in its history the Imperial government raised Manchuria to the dignity of a single administrative area. A Viceroy was set up with authority superior to that of the three provincial Governors. The court hoped by this reorganization to increase the political energy, the efficiency and the power of resistance of the province. Apparently it also made an honest attempt to place at the head of the new administration capable executives. Yet when the Manchu court sought for capable leaders to save for the dynasty its ancient heritage it found them, not among the Manchus but among the Chinese. The Viceroy was Hsu-Shih-Chang. The Governor of Fengtien was Tang-Shao-Yi, a graduate of Yale and subsequently first Premier of the Chinese Republic. Mukden was the capital of Fengtien as well as of Manchuria, and Willard Straight as Consul-General was brought into early and intimate relationship both with Viceroy Hsu and Governor Tang. How he looked upon their prospects and capabilities at the time they assumed office may be inferred from the following extract from a letter:

"The new administration is at last installed and it will be extremely interesting to watch the progress of events during the next months. Tang is one of the cleverest men in China, but whether he is strong enough to resist and unselfish and patriotic enough to risk the consequences of

resisting Japanese aggression one cannot tell. If there were a central government that could be depended upon to support the stands taken by provincial officials it would be another story, while if the provincial officials would only realize the difference between the essentials and non-essentials, and grasp the desirability of living up to their treaty obligations and the dangers of trying to evade the consequences of their own admissions, extended perhaps but nevertheless on record, China would be able to hold her own."

The reorganization changed the political and economic atmosphere of Manchuria for Willard Straight. Under the former divided provincial administration he could as Consul at Mukden have taken few effective steps to check Japan, to protect China and to promote American interests. The political unification of Manchuria and the arrival of a Viceroy and Governor who were selected for the purpose of resisting Japan gave him an opportunity which under former conditions he could not have obtained. It not only increased his own importance as the American diplomatic representative at the seat of a government which had become more of a realm than a province, but it supplied him with possible Chinese agents for the advancement of his projects.

As he saw it, there was only one way in which he could effectively promote American interests in Manchuria and at the same time use the increased American influence for the benefit of Chinese independence. He must bring about the investment of a large volume of American capital in that region. The amount of trade which American merchants could obtain merely by exporting to Manchuria the few manufactured articles which the Chinese market could

absorb was insignificant. If Americans wished to build up a lucrative business, their financiers must lend the money which the Chinese needed for the purpose of building railways and developing natural resources, and in this way create a demand for the products which their merchants wanted to sell in China. Such was the course which the French and the English had adopted and which the Japanese were ready to adopt, provided they themselves could borrow the money which they proposed to lend to China. Unless the Americans were willing to do the same thing on a large scale, they could not possibly obtain a substantial share of Chinese trade or exercise any effective influence on the destinies of China.

It so happened, moreover, that by a fortunate accident Willard Straight was in a position at least to obtain a hearing for any plausible project which called for the investment of American capital in Manchuria. During his few months in the United States he had renewed the acquaintance with Mr. E. H. Harriman which had begun at Seoul in June 1905. He had discussed with Mr. Harriman the possibility of American investments in Manchuria, and he had received apparently a somewhat vague commission to submit to Mr. Harriman plans for the railroad development of the province with American capital.

Mr. Harriman's interest in Manchuria was a legacy from a grandiose railway project which he had conceived at or near the close of the Russo-Japanese War. For some years his energetic and fertile mind had been fascinated by the idea of a transportation system which would encircle the globe. He already controlled a trans-continental railroad in the United States and a line of trans-Pacific steamers. He proposed, if possible, to acquire an interest in the Trans-

Siberian Railway with the idea of ultimately establishing a steamship line between some Baltic port and New York. The project of acquiring the Trans-Siberian Railway looked remote, but he hoped that as a consequence of its defeat in the war the Russian government might be willing to transfer control to an American company which could prove its ability to furnish the needed capital for the improvement of its roadbed and equipment and to operate it more efficiently.

The journey of Mr. Harriman and his family to the Far East in 1905 was born of this project. Mr. Harriman had established close relations with the Japanese government by virtue of the assistance which he and Kuhn, Loeb and Company, in cooperation with Sir Edward Cassel, had rendered in floating the last war loan; and it seems that the Japanese suggested the trip and encouraged the project. As a part of his around-the-world transportation system, he needed an interest in the South Manchurian Railway which the Japanese had taken over from the Russians. In July or August 1905, Mr. Harriman had reached an understanding with Marquis Ito and Count Haksura, then Japanese Premier, whereby Mr. Harriman was to furnish the capital for the reconstruction and operation of the South Manchurian line, and for the development of the various mineral, timber and other concessions along its route. The Japanese were to keep a large interest in the enterprise and to exercise political control over it. Mr. H. W. Denison was to represent Japanese interests in the railroad and to live in the United States. Mr. Harriman had hoped that this agreement would be ratified before he returned to the United States. But a serious obstacle appeared. The Treaty of Portsmouth reserved to the Chinese government an interest in the disposition of the property and Mr. Harriman returned home without having settled anything.

The ratification never occurred. It was opposed by powerful Japanese statesmen, among them Count Komura; and the Japanese backed down, using as the pretext for their retreat, Chinese opposition. Ultimately the Japanese government obtained in London the funds with which to finance the extension of their South Manchurian road.

Willard Straight and the "Intendant of the Eastern Marches"

They kept the stock themselves and issued six percent bonds in return for the new capital. In an agreement with the Chinese government signed in December 1905, the Japanese secured the franchise to build a railroad from Mukden to Antung on the Yalu River to connect with the line running north from Seoul to Wiju (on the opposite side of the Yalu) which in turn connected with the road running south

from Seoul to Fusan. In order to assure uniformity, the Japanese, much to the disappointment of British interests spent the funds which they had borrowed in London for the purchase of railway material in the United States.

But Edward Harriman was not a man to abandon a project on account of the appearance of even extremely formidable obstacles. If he could not secure the South Manchurian Railway, he might obtain from the Chinese the right to build a new line further west which would serve equally well to supply the Trans-Siberian with an ice-free terminus on the Pacific. Before Willard Straight started for Mukden he had talked over possibilities of this kind with Mr. Harriman. The latter was willing to give an attentive hearing to any project for new railroads, particularly if they offered him a chance of reviving his daring but fantastic plan for the transportation of people and goods around the world. Willard was not slow to take advantage of his hospitality. His diary contains the following entry under the date of Wednesday, August 7th, 1907: "Tang approves draft. Letter mailed! Fraught with tremendous possibilities. If adopted it means we play principal part in the development of Manchuria. Our influence in China tremendously enhanced."

This entry refers to a letter which he had written to Mr. Harriman, submitting to that gentleman a concrete project for the development of Manchuria with the assistance of American capital. He had not wasted any time. Within a few weeks after the arrival in Mukden of Hsu-Shih-Chang and Tang-Shao-Yi he took up with them a plan for an extension of the Imperial Railways of North China from Hsinmintun to Fakumen with the idea of eventually carrying the extension from the latter point to Tsitsihar and Aigun

on the Amur River. Many conferences followed, most of which were held with Tang-Shao-Yi. The Governor, while he encouraged the building of this railway, proposed to begin the economic development of the province by the establishment of a Manchurian bank with a capital of 20,000,000 gold dollars. He would designate this bank as the financial agent of the Manchurian administration and would utilize its services not only for promoting railway construction and various industrial enterprises in Manchuria but also for stabilizing the wretched currency system of the three provinces. Willard prepared and Governor Tang approved a memorandum which was to be used for interesting American capital and particularly Mr. Harriman in the project. It was mailed on August 7th. But alas! the letter fraught with such tremendous possibilities reached New York at a poor time. The panic of 1907 was under way. It hit Mr. Harriman particularly hard and it prevented him from even considering the project.

Yet the result of the first check was not entirely discouraging. Mr. Harriman did not, it is true, betray much interest in the idea of a state bank. He preferred a railroad without any political or financial encumbrances. But he did not finally reject the project. He only, for a very good reason, postponed its consideration. Governor Tang on his side considered the delay unfortunate, yet he did not abate his confidence in the American Consular agent. In the meantime he had other irons in the fire. Early in September he summoned to Mukden representatives of French and British capital; and in October after Mr. Harriman's reply had arrived, he asked them to return. The plan of a Manchurian state bank was temporarily dropped, but the project of building a northerly extension from some point on

the existing Imperial line from Peking to Mukden was submitted to Lord ffrench, who represented Pauling and Company, a firm of British contractors, and to J. O. P. Bland, who represented in China the British and Chinese Corporation. They secured early in November a concession to finance and build the proposed extension from Hsinmintun forty-seven miles north to the town of Fakumen. Willard's knowledge of these negotiations is proved by the following entry in his diary under the date of November 8th: "ffrench signed his contract today at about 5 o'clock, and was as pleased as punch. It provides for 50 miles at £6,500 per mile, £20,000 to be devoted to stations, telephones, telegraphs and the like. He has a supplementary and secret arrangement for the completion of the sections from Tsinanfu to Tsitsihar. Total 400 miles to be built as soon as possible. Money for the road probably to be secured from Bland. He is assured that Jordan will back him in case of trouble and that Morrison will fix Foreign Office against Japanese interference. I believe that Bland has recognized the Chinese desire to avail themselves of foreign support to check the Japanese in Manchuria. He brought ffrench out to get this line and sent Morrison home to fix things there. While I should like to see Americans undertaking all this work I am quite certain that we would do it less creditably than the British."

This particular concession was planned to challenge Japanese predominance in North-Eastern China. Superficially the proposed line was a short extension of the railroad from Shanhaikwan to Tsinanfu which the British had built and still in part controlled. In reality, however, the proposed grant tested the sincerity of the adherence by the Japanese to the policy of the "open door" and violated,

as they claimed, a secret clause of the convention of 1905 between China and Japan in which China had agreed not to permit the construction of any road parallel to the South Manchurian Railway. For although the mileage of the proposed new road ran through Mongolia rather than Manchuria and so escaped the supposed sphere of Japanese influence it would, if it were extended from Fakumen to Tsitsihar, afford an inside short line of communication between Peking and the Trans-Siberian Railway and so deprive the South Manchurian Railway of some of its importance.

The negotiation of this project helped to clarify and form Willard's opinions about the most effective method of promoting the economic development of China. It brought him into intimate personal relationship with two men whom he had already met in Peking and who helped him to crystallize and work out his ideas and plans. These men were Mr. J. O. P. Bland and M. Maurice Casenave, then the representatives of British and French financial interests in China.

Mr. Bland was an Irishman long resident in the Far East, who had started like Willard in the Chinese Customs Service and who subsequently had become secretary to the International Concessions of Shanghai. He had a ready pen, a lively and penetrating mind and a quick and sharp wit. Willard had illustrated a book of Bland's entitled Verse and Worse when he was studying Chinese at Nanking, and later in Peking Bland's cleverness and knowledge of the world had enormously impressed him. They formed a lasting friendship which was none the less intimate and warm because of some differences in opinion about the best way of carrying on the work in which they were jointly inter-

ested. Although now primarily a man of affairs, Willard retained a more sympathetic interest in writers and in painters than he could have had if he had not tried his own hand at journalism and illustration; and a man like Bland who conducted large business affairs without ceasing to be a man of letters peculiarly appealed to him. Moreover, he himself had not become so exclusively a man of affairs that he could no longer wield his pencil. While at Mukden he drew some illustrations of another book of Mr. Bland's called House Boat Days in China, which are probably his most successful single exploit in the art of illustration.

Mr. Casenave, during the Great War the Chief of the French High Commission in the United States, was also a former acquaintance of Willard's. They had met in Peking in 1902 when M. Casenave was Chargé d'Affaires of the French Legation, and they were now again brought together by a common interest in the economic development of China and a common conviction as to the best means of bringing it about.

They both independently had reached the same conclusions as to the method which offered the best chance both of protecting the independence of China and of arranging for her necessary future equipment with the machinery of modern transport and industry. They both represented countries which in their opinion could best promote their national interests in China by following a politically disinterested policy. They both feared the results of the existing competition for exclusive concessions. They both thought that it would necessitate and accelerate the territorial and economic partition of China, the larger share going to the most unscrupulous and energetic exploiters. On the other hand, they both knew that if the more disinterested nations

refused to participate in the investment of capital in China, they would merely remove obstacles from the path of Japan and Russia. They both hoped to substitute for the existing scramble for concessions some measure of international financial coöperation in lending money to China and in providing the machinery for her industrial development. That was why Willard was perfectly willing to have the representatives of French and British capital called in by the Manchurian administration. He was well aware that even with the best will in the world and unlimited resources Americans alone could not successfully carry on the work. The sensible alternative was to recognize from the start the necessity of sharing the concessions and the profits and to negotiate terms which would be fair to the several capital-exporting Powers and which would give to them a common interest in preserving the integrity of China.

In reaching this conclusion the two men were feeling their way towards a statesmanlike plan for financing Chinese development. It is by some such method, if at all, that international finance will have to abate the evils which inevitably arise from the competition for exclusive concessions in economically backward countries on the part of the separate nationalist exporters of capital. This competition, undertaken as it was under the protection of the several governments, involved the competing nations in costly and irritating conflicts; and the resulting concessions, which were usually obtained by a combination of intrigues and threats, were often injurious to the economic welfare and to the political independence of the backward country. For this reason the liberal and socialist critics of capitalist methods opposed any participation in the traffic by their own governments. But such opposition did not meet the diffi-

Sketch of M. Maurice Casenave by Willard Straight

culty. Whenever it succeeded it brought about the retirement from the competition of one, and usually the most scrupulous, of the competitors and the abandonment of the victim to the unchecked lusts of the less scrupulous of the capital-exporting nations. In any event the economic development of these countries was bound to take place and by

means of concessions. It seemed wiser to recognize this necessity and to devise a method for the joint international export of capital which would abate the abuses and dangers of the existing method.

During the last few years the idea of a combination of the financial groups which are interested in seeking Chinese concessions has become familiar, and at the present time such a consortium exists and is succeeding, if not in lending money on fair terms to a trustworthy Chinese government, at least in preventing less responsible agencies from extorting concessions in return for undesirable and often wasted loans. But in 1907 the idea looked chimerical, and the obstacles in the way of its realization may well have seemed insuperable. It required on the part of a man who proposed to put it into practice an ardent faith in its soundness, a shrewd understanding of its nature and the importance of the several obstacles, and finally an indomitable persistence in seeking its realization.

The intrinsic difficulty of uniting the various financial groups then operating in China upon a live-and-let-live cooperative policy was enormous. The majority of the concession hunters were confirmed national imperialists who were sceptical about the possibility of international finance, who disliked the irksome limitations of international action and who distrusted with more or less justification and goodwill one or more of their competitors. Mr. J. O. P. Bland, for instance, although a resolute partisan of the policy of the "open door" and anxious to prevent Japanese and Russian aggression at the expense of China, was suspicious of German expansion and believed that China in her own interest should grant the richest of the concessions to good British capitalists. An attitude of this kind on the part of

the concession hunters had a demoralizing effect on the Chinese. The latter were in a certain sense impotent; they were fearful; they disliked and distrusted the foreigners who were so insistently soliciting the opportunity of introducing revolutionary changes in the mechanism of their life. But at the same time they were covetous and could not give up their own personal share in the profits of the exploitation. They preferred to deal with a number of competing and intriguing concession hunters rather than with one unified international financial group. They themselves were clever intriguers and found it congenial and profitable to play off the different groups one against the other. They feared that a combination of all the concession hunters into a trust, thereafter the only source from which they could borrow money, would render it impossible for them to protest against terms which the trust decided to impose upon them. They were trained to consider foreign governments and foreign money lenders as their enemies whom they must divide one against the other as a necessary condition of their own independence.

The opposition of his immediate superior Mr. Rockhill rendered it important for Willard to build up influential political support for his attempt to expand American investments in Manchuria; and in November he seized a fortunate opportunity of discussing his plans with a man who shared the President's confidence and who, as it happened, later possessed the power to place behind the project the whole influence of the American government. Mr. William Howard Taft, then Secretary of War in President Roosevelt's Cabinet, happened to be travelling in the Far East. He had made in Shanghai a speech which gave emphatic expression to American friendship for China. He

was due in Vladivostok about the middle of November en route for America by the Trans-Siberian Railway. Willard Straight joined him there on November 18th. The immediate object of the interview was to obtain Mr. Taft's approval of an idea which had occurred to Governor Tang of using for the economic development of Manchuria some of the funds which the American government had already agreed to remit from its share of the Boxer indemnity. But Willard also proposed to take advantage of the opportunity to submit to Mr. Taft the arguments in favor of his general plan for the investment of American capital in China with the approval and support of the American government. The opportunity proved to be excellent because both at Vladivostok and on the train between Vladivostok and Harbin he had long and frank conversations with Mr. Taft.

These conversations seemed to Willard of so much importance that he left unusually full records of them in his diary, some parts of which deserve quotation:

Nov. 18th, 1907. "Arrived in Vladivostok at twelve, where we were met by Martin Egan and General Edwards and hustled right out to the 'Rainbow.' The Secretary greeted us very cordially. Afterwards I delivered Tang's message and told him how sorry the Chinese were that he had not passed through. He first blamed it on the condition of the trains and then admitted that he wished to accept no more than necessary from the Japanese. . . . He had been much impressed by his reception at Shanghai and felt strongly that China was turning to us as the one disinterested friend. He hoped that we might do something. I assured him that we could—that now is the time—and that the fruit is ripe and it is ours to pluck. With this he seemed to agree."

The next day another conversation much to the same effect followed. "We then talked about Manchuria. He was pleased to hear of the reception accorded the Shanghai speech and asked many questions about present conditions. I suggested Tang's loan scheme which appealed to him, but he didn't seem very optimistic over the chance of obtaining funds at the present time nor sanguine of the Administration's success in interesting financiers. Taft rather took to Tang's scheme of applying the indemnity for an American loan." As soon as he returned to Mukden he wrote to Mr. Taft of Tang's gratification "with the favorable manner in which you received his suggestion about the use of the indemnity." A few days later in a letter to M. Casenave he stated "if the Administration accepts the advice which Mr. Taft gives, it will be inclined to regard Manchuria as a fair field and not as one which must be approached with special regard for the susceptibilities of the Japanese"; but he added when he touched on the subject of American participation in an international loan to China, he received "little encouragement."

Towards the end of December 1907 it became certain that the Japanese would vigorously oppose the construction by Pauling and Company of the line from Hsinmintun to Fakumen. The news of the concession had leaked out and warning notes began to appear in the newspapers. At the time Willard did not attach much importance to these warnings. He believed that the British Foreign Office would lend diplomatic support to the holders of the concession and that building would begin in the spring. In this he was mistaken. The Foreign Office did not propose to quarrel with the ally of the British Empire about so small a matter. In fact some Englishmen in China began to suspect that the

Chinese had granted the concession, not with the expectation of having the railroad built but for the purpose of weakening Japan by stirring up trouble between the Japanese and the British Foreign Offices. Moreover the Japanese claim of a secret clause in the railroad convention of 1905 which bound China not to parallel the South Manchurian Railway clouded the title to the concession and diminished the enthusiasm with which they had entered into the project. Willard himself who saw Governor Tang daily believed in the good faith of his Chinese friend, but he had much the same reason for rejoicing at the prospect of a diplomatic controversy between Japan and Great Britain that a patriotic Chinaman would have. He wished to obtain British assistance in the fight against Japanese aggression in Manchuria. Absorbed as he was in resisting Japan, he underestimated the strength of the ties which bound Japan and the British Empire together.

About this time he became conscious of one grave handicap from which the case of the Chinese against Japan and in favor of the investment of other than Japanese capital in Manchuria suffered. They disposed of no vehicle through which it could be persuasively presented to the public. He persuaded Tang, consequently, to set up a publicity bureau which would distribute to the newspapers and to influential people trustworthy information about the needs of Manchuria and the opportunities afforded by the provinces for agricultural and industrial development. On January 1st the new bureau was established. Its chief was George Marvin, who gives the following account of its origin. "It was," he says, "Willard's conception, and at first he had hoped to get someone like Martin Egan, Percy MacDonald or Frederic McCormick of the Associated Press to tackle the

job, which involved an intimate knowledge of Chinese affairs and publicity methods as well as an almost quixotic devotion to the cause. The proposition was duly broached to Egan and MacDonald on the Trans-Siberian Express between Vladivostok and Harbin. Both were inspired by its possibilities and gave us excellent advice, but neither man wanted to tackle it himself—they believed they had more important concerns in the Philippines and at home in connection with Mr. Taft's candidacy—and could not at the time suggest anyone else exactly appropriate. Consequently, after many long talks, it was finally decided that, if the plan proved acceptable to Yuan in Peking and by implication to the Department in Washington, I should resign and try to do the best I could with its possibilities.

"The value of Straight's idea may be realized when it is understood that up to this time China had actually never felt the necessity of publishing its case before the world.

'The East bowed low before the blast,
'In patient, deep disdain.'

This was literally the first occasion in Chinese history when the Imperial government had appealed to international public opinion for justice. On their side the Japanese had for years understood the value of publicity. With the exception of an occasional utterance, such as the books of Thomas Millard or the dispatches of Frederic McCormick, Peking correspondent of the Associated Press, and of the redoubtable Dr. Morrison of the London Times (impervious to distasteful alliances) no news was published about Manchuria which did not originate in Japanese sources and reach the press through Japanese-controlled channels. It is not an exaggeration to say that up to February 1908 three-quarters of the so-called news regarding Manchuria

was propaganda. My task was to counter-check this well-organized propaganda by a clear statement of the Chinese position, an exposition of events and tendencies north of the Great Wall, and to gain for such revelations the widest possible publicity.

"On December 28th my resignation was accepted in a personal cable from Mr. Root, so worded as to convey approval of Straight's course. Tang meanwhile had secured the approval of the Viceroy, then absent from Mukden on a two months' tour in the Northern Provinces, and Peking had already consented. At that time no one else knew of the fact of my resignation nor anything about the circumstances affecting it. A brief interruption camouflaged the event.

"The morning after the cable arrived from the Secretary of State, as United States Marshal, I took over from the Chinese the custody of McKinley, an American fugitive from justice, and after an amusing two days convoy handed him over for safe keeping to the British Consular jail in Tientsin. Thus happily ended for all but McKinley a perplexing case in international law in which Straight established a precedent. The Chinese were given the credit and 'face' of arrest and recapture of the criminal, they were pleased by a temporary waiver of extraterritorial rights, and the fugitive was duly brought to justice in Oregon, convicted and sentenced.

"On my return to Mukden we at once set to work organizing our campaign. A rough itinerary was mapped out and from our own records and those gladly furnished from the Governor's yamen we compiled a truly formidable amount of hitherto unpublished material. With generalities we were not concerned. My dossiers consisted of state-

ments of fact, backed up by chapter and verse references and reinforced by exact figures and dates. Personalities, however, were scrupulously avoided and we discarded everything which might appear to be merely sensational. Equipped with this ammunition, a carte-blanche expense account from Tang, a bundle of letters of introduction from Willard, and squired by the faithful boy 'Chang'—who afterwards became 'William'—I set forth about the middle of January upon the new adventure."

In the meantime the new Manchurian administration, undismayed by the failure of its first attempts, continued to push ahead the plans with which it eventually expected to tempt American and British capital into Manchuria. In March 1908 the Viceroy called a conference of the Governors of the three Manchurian provinces at Mukden. The assembly endorsed Tang-Shao-Yi's plan for the flotation of a Manchurian loan and submitted a memorial to the Throne praying for an approval of the project. Willard reported the action to his own government in a dispatch dated March 10th. Tang himself shortly thereafter went to Peking in order to use his own influence there on behalf of the success of his plans. His influence was considerable, for he was an important member of the party of Yuan-Shi-Kai, then head of the Foreign Office and the dominant force in the government. He soon obtained the endorsement by the Empress Dowager of his plan. He also prepared for a journey to the United States in order to return thanks for the generosity of this country in remitting its share of the Boxer indemnity. The government after proposing first to send another emissary finally decided to commission Tang for this office and to conceal the real financial object of his visit behind the screen of this complimentary mission.

During the same months the new publicity bureau made an encouraging start. "The material," writes George Marvin, "was excellent. Everybody wanted it and clamored for more. All I had to do was to put the stuff together and ladle it out with discrimination. From the very start the China coast papers carried our news and the foreign correspondents cabled and wrote it to their home papers. The Chinese vernacular press in Peking, Hankow, Shanghai and Hongkong jumped at it. McCormick of the Associated Press at Peking promptly became an ally. In Manila Joe Ohl of the New York Herald and the Manila Times was sworn in, and General Wood and Governor Forbes became actively interested. It was the same way with the foreign language press in Japan. Afterwards we found that our material had been copied and printed in Italy and France and even in far away Spanish America, and, while placing all the information then at my disposal, I was so fortunate as to establish at each point visited connections and open channels which made possible a continuing and wider distribution of information thereafter.

"Although my work carried me thousands of miles away from Mukden, I remained in spirit throughout my absence closely linked to the originator of the plan, who was chiefly interested in its development and success. We had an ingenious cable and telegraph code which I think would have perplexed almost any expert. And as our mail was so often tampered with we had gradually adopted, even before I left Mukden, a cryptic language of our own, used orally as well as in correspondence, which was sometimes so cryptic that we could not even read it ourselves. The Japanese were the 'Bandarlog,' and we had rather profane and ridiculous nicknames for most of the prominent personages with whom

our correspondence was concerned. Willard was 'Straigt-ho,' Fletcher was 'Prather' and the inflection of words like 'hoto-batho, 'frocko coato,' etc., added flavor to the dialect. My interest never flagged in the work itself, but Straight's welcome letters received in distant cities invariably kindled added enthusiasm. . . .

"The plan succeeded altogether too well. In inverse ratio to Japanese consternation the Chinese were delighted. There were congratulations from both Hsu and Tang, and we were given to understand that there was some satisfaction registered inside the Forbidden City. Nothing that had happened, however, quite reconciled me to moving out of the temple. But a move was of course imperative. Arrangements were made through the Viceregal yamen with the Llama priests whereby I secured the lease of the compound next door, and repairs had already been started on the additional buildings when Tang was called to Peking by Yuan-Shi-Kai. A few days later, at Tang's request, I followed and took up my residence in Peking, where I continued for several weeks under Tang's direction to carry on our propaganda.

"Meanwhile Japanese concern had grown to alarm and hostility. I was shadowed and my mail tampered with. At Mukden Straight had several embarrassing occurrences culminating in the so-called 'Mukden Incident,' when a Japanese postman and some of his compatriots forced an entrance into the temple compound and were driven out after a brisk fight in which Straight was nearly involved. I well remember coming into the Peking Club one afternoon with Bland and McCormick to find this sufficiently alarming news, greatly exaggerated in the Chinese telegram, posted on the bulletin board. It was at first reported that

Willard had been shot. A few days later at Washington, Baron Takahira, the Japanese Ambassador, called at the State Department and quietly asked for an explanation of the activities of an ex-American Consular Officer in the Chinese service. It so happened that this query came at a most critical juncture in the diplomatic crisis over Japanese immigration in California."

It was early in April that the incident occurred to which Mr. Marvin refers. On April 3rd Straight mentions in his diary a row with the Japanese which resulted in the arrest by himself of four of the offensive islanders whom he took to the Japanese Consul. He intimated that the Japanese Consul was impertinent and deserved a sharp rebuke. Two days later he wrote a long letter to George Marvin giving a humorous sketch of the incident. The account is too long for reproduction here, but I will quote instead a shorter summing up which he wrote to a friend some weeks later. "The poor devil of a postman little thought when he belabored poor old Clarence the Gateman that he would find himself cited as a *casus belli*. He tried to force his way in the wrong gate, was prevented by a coolie, attacked the same, was shown out politely but firmly and told where he could go. He found four pals and came back, entered the compound, even going into my bedroom, pulled the servants out by the hair and made a generally bad mess. He with his fellow thugs was then consigned to the gate-house and as I did not propose to stand guard and knew that the Chinese could not, I took the whole lot to my Japanese colleague. There was considerable correspondence on the subject and the postman now reposes in the Japanese gaol as does one of his cronies. Another man was fined and the fourth allowed to go." Two days after sending the long

account to Marvin, Willard became apprehensive that his correspondent might publish his own story of the assault on the Consulate. He wrote again stating that he had almost telegraphed a warning not to use the facts contained in his letter.

Marvin, however, unconscious of what the effect would be, published the "story." He inserted in a Tientsin newspaper a lively account of the affair which read that Japanese rioters had attacked the Chinese employes of the American Consulate, that the Consul-General had stood them off with firearms and that the Japanese Consul had practically refused satisfaction. The article added to the immense commotion already produced by the incident. The American newspapers took it up and cabled to Willard for explanations. His own departmental superiors were annoyed and did not scruple to say so. Willard himself was discomfited. He feared at the time that the mistake would ruin their plans and would result in his own retirement.

On April 14th, he wrote Marvin: "I have read the article in the P & T Times myself. I can hardly believe that you wrote it as it seems too ill-advised. The fault is, of course, mine, for I should have asked you not to use the information furnished in my letter. It was a semi-humorous account of the affair and intended for your own amusement. Even the printing of the facts would not have made much difference for they were accessible to anyone. But when you state what I said and wrote to Kato and what he said and wrote to me, the thing becomes serious. Such information could have come from no one but myself. That is evident to the man in the street. K.'s lack of courtesy laid him open to criticism, but my acting in giving away my correspondence with a colleague to the press is that of

a cad. Now I know, of course, that when you wrote your article, if you did do it, you were probably in a hurry, and probably unaware of the danger that you were playing with.

Sketches of disputatious Chinese coolies by Willard Straight --while in Mukden

Certainly you could not have known how much it would all react on me. . . . You make me look like a swashbuckler, with my revolver, the state of riot, heroic Consul protecting helpless Chinese, etc. It's too damned funny, really, but I tell you that I am about as sick an individual as ever walked. . . . Take Tang's advice and go slow."

As a result of the unfortunate notoriety which the new publicity bureau obtained, George Marvin did go slow. In his own words: "Japan was quite prepared to go to the mat. But American public opinion except on the Pacific Coast

would not then have supported a policy which might have driven us into hostilities with Japan. In the minor detail of our enterprise there was only one thing to do. Through the Legation at Peking I received a cable from Mr. Bacon which left me no choice of action. The Chinese, ignorant of conditions outside their own immediate interests, could not understand why I laid down my commission at the very height of its success. Tang was deeply disappointed. There was disappointment in Mukden too. As for me it was the greatest disappointment I had ever known. Afterwards we became more reconciled when we realized with calmer judgment that the Chinese sovereignty plan had been radical, to say the least, and that it had for the time being accomplished its purpose."

After the notoriety which the incident brought upon him, Willard decided that it would be as well to curb his own speed too. Fortunately he had at his disposal an excellent pretext for a temporary disappearance. Some months earlier he had pressed the State Department for permission to explore Manchuria and to investigate its agricultural and commercial possibilities. In the beginning he had not received much encouragement, but towards the end of April the Secretary approved of the plan. The meaning which Willard attached to this approval and his own attitude towards it is indicated by a few extracts from his correspondence. He wrote to George Marvin on May 7th: "I have decided on making the trip after weighing pros and cons. The back seat will be welcome not only physically but in other ways. I have an idea that this may have been the Department's idea rather than anxiety to learn about the trade of Petuna. Between you and me I should not be surprised if after the trip is over there was word to go home

or elsewhere." A few days later in a letter to Assistant Secretary Wilson he adds: "This leave is particularly welcome, for, as you may imagine, the events of the past few weeks have tried my nerves a little. Doubtless the Department thought it advisable to give me absent treatment for a time. Much as I have been troubled personally I cannot but feel that you too have been annoyed and embarrassed and this aggravates my own chagrin. . . . One always remembers that there is a certain locality reputed to be paved with good intentions which seems to be the last word on the subject."

He started north on May 24th, accompanied by an associate, Commander Gillis. His plan was to travel by rail to Kuangchengtsu, which is the station which divides the Japanese from the Russian section of the Manchurian Railway. From there he was to go in part by train and in part by boat to Kirin, the capital of the province of the same name, and from there to Hun-chun, a city on the Tumen River near the Korean border. He proposed to explore conditions along this border, and then to return north-east to Ninguta, a city not far from the Trans-Siberian Railway. From Ninguta he was to go by rail to Harbin, thence by boat down the Sungari and Amur Rivers as far as Habarovsk. He then turned on his tracks and boarded a boat which went up the Amur to Blagavestchenk, which is on the Russian side opposite to Aigun. Aigun, the reader will remember, was to be the terminus of the proposed Hsinmintun-Fakumen-Tsitsihar extension of the Imperial Railways. From Aigun he was to follow the proposed route of this extension across the province of Heilung-chiang to Tsitsihar on the Trans-Siberian Road and thence south to Fakumen. The journey would occupy several months. It

would traverse a region which was little known to his own countrymen, some of whose cities had recently been opened up for trade. The friendly Manchurian administration gave him a military escort on those legs of the journey which ran through wild and disorderly country; and he was in addition equipped with every conceivable official credential. His journey was uneventful except for the discovery of some interesting ruins. These ruins were spacious and spectacular enough to suggest to Gillis, Willard's companion, that they might have before them the remains of Kubla Khan's palace, located by Coleridge at Xanadu or Shangtu:

> "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure dome decree
> Where Alph, the sacred river ran
> Through caverns measureless to man
> Down to a sunless sea."

The attribution is doubtful and the account of their explorations in Willard Straight's diary is too confused and incomplete for reproduction here, but in reference to it the reader may find interesting the following extract from Chinese Monuments, by Frederic McCormick, printed on page 133 of Vol. XLIII of the Journal of the Northern Chinese Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

"More than a dozen famous capitals are mentioned in Chinese history, famous for their architecture and monuments. Vast and solemn remains of these capitals at widely separated points may still be seen. Shangtu, the 'Cambaluc' of Coleridge, is accurately located on new maps of North China to the west of the important Mongol market, Dolonor, on the little river Shangtu. Here the remains of the walls of Kubla Khan's summer capital may still be

Willard Straight as he looked during his trip through Manchuria

seen. Dr. Bushnell, the Orientalist, has mentioned inscriptions found there, and it is possible that the future antiquary studying the spot with scientific scrutiny may make discoveries of value. Marco Polo, the most distinguished traveler among Europeans to visit China, gave to the world the only existing record of the wonders of Shangtu, of which Coleridge dreamed and wrote striking words not hitherto regarded as facts. It has been stated that Coleridge knew nothing of Shangtu and that he derived the images of his poems from a dream, the figment of which he coined into golden measures when he had risen from his couch.

"It is interesting in connection with these rhythmic fancies that in 1908 two American travelers, Mr. Willard Straight and Commander Gillis, described ruins in the

neighborhood of the old Manchurian capital of Tungking, Kirin province, which they found to correspond to the 'image' of Coleridge's poem. A mazy river flowed through matchless scenes and disappeared; there were wells in which ice could be seen although it was July; the foundations of a summer house on an islet that at one time cast its shadow over the water, were reached by a ruined bridge; there was a waterfall, and rustics told a legend of a hapless maiden princess, buried beneath. There was also in the neighborhood a legend concerning a venerable tortoise which lived under the water surrounding the islet. In fact the coincidences of the features of the poet's city with the site of this ancient Manchurian capital were so striking as to have partly convinced the travelers that Coleridge had reproduced a description of a place he had erroneously assigned to Shangtu."

In only one respect did Willard depart from the itinerary which he had planned in advance. He had intended to proceed from Tsitsihar across Mongolia to Fakumen and Hsinmintun, but when he reached that station he found a telegram from the Department which ordered him to return at his earliest convenience to the United States. He had anticipated something of this kind when he had started on his journey, but as it happened he had failed to penetrate the Department's reason for issuing the order. The episode of the Japanese Consul, if not forgotten, had nothing to do with his recall. His own grandiose projects for the investment of American capital in Manchuria were more influential. Both the State Department and E. H. Harriman had decided to try out some part of his project. Tang's visit to Washington was impending. Mr. Harriman was becoming ready to resume his Chinese adventure. Willard

was needed in Washington for purposes of consultation. He immediately entrained for Mukden arriving there on July 30th. Two weeks later he started for home.

But when he started home he was not traveling with empty hands. He had in his pocket a memorandum of agreement which he found time to negotiate with Tang before his departure and which renewed the project he had submitted to Mr. Harriman just a year previous. It provided for a loan of twenty million dollars for the establishment of a bank which would finance railway construction and mining, timber and agricultural development. Mr. J. O. P. Bland accompanied him on his return journey across Siberia. He reports that the night before their departure "the Viceroy (Hsu Shih-Chang) and Tang-Shao-Yi had given a banquet in his honor at the Viceregal yamen, at which there was much eloquent talk on the coming Entente Cordiale between China and the United States on a profit sharing basis, and a good deal of post prandial enthusiasm. The foreign guests were Mr. Arnell (Straight's successor at the Consulate), George Marvin, Herr Mezger, the German Consul and myself. There were also two young Americans, farmers, recently brought out by Tang-Shao-Yi, in his usual impulsive and princely way, with a view to introducing scientific (Wisconsin) methods of agriculture in Manchuria—one of his many well-meant schemes that perished for lack of a definite plan and adequate funds. Nearly all the Chinese guests had been educated in the United States and wore European dress. All united to acclaim Straight as the future saviour of the situation, and to voice the hope that on his return from the States, China would at last be secured in the exercise of her legitimate sovereign rights and free to develop Manchuria for the benefit of all

comers on equal terms. It was all very uplifting and impressive. Everyone felt proud and pleased to be thus assisting, as Tang put it, at the initiation of great events. To have said anything to damp the general enthusiasm would have been unseemly. Nevertheless, in my diary's record of that day I wrote 'Qui vivra verra,' and noted that the proceedings would have been more convincing had there been any indication of an intention on the part of the Chinese to help themselves, to abandon their helpless drifting in such urgent matters as the Chientao and Yalu negotiations."

So ended two years of intense activity, of real responsibility and rapid growth in which every phase of his many-sided, impulsive, companionable and lovable nature had obtained for the first time full expression. During these two years he was not entirely happy. He was hampered by lack of money, by official obstinacy and routine and by the necessity of fighting a stiff battle with inferior weapons under discouraging and often intensely uncomfortable surroundings. He frequently succumbed to fits of depression, during which he hesitated about continuing the fight and seriously considered the transfer of his energy to an easier and more lucrative sphere of expression. But his resilient and dynamic personality emerged from these spells just as soon as an opportunity for action provided a sufficient release. And in a deeper sense he was really happy. He was projecting the figures of his imagination on the canvas of the world. He was dealing, not successfully but still competently and attentively, with the actual difficulties which needed to be overcome before his vision could be realized. He was creating in the neighborhood of his personality the society of friends, collaborators and critics who were to fur-

nish the necessary interlocutors in his personal drama. Above all, he was planting the banner of a country which he loved and served on a frontier where, as he believed, it could become the rallying point for a better organization of the economic forces of civilization. He was to his own

Willard Straight and some of his friends shortly before his departure from Mukden

imagination carrying on the great tradition of the pioneer explorers of his own people and race—the tradition of occupying by peaceful penetration and economic service regions previously given over to disorder, waste and barbarism.

CHAPTER VIII

AMERICAN CAPITAL AND CHINESE CONCESSIONS

WHEN Willard Straight returned to America in September 1908 he had some reason to feel encouraged with what he had accomplished during his last two years in China. He had accepted his appointment to Mukden at a time when the culminating act of Japanese aggression in Korea was vividly impressed on his mind and he had gone to Manchuria with his back stiffened by the definite intention of trying in some practical way to build up American influence in China as the best means of preventing a repetition in Manchuria of what had already happened in Korea. He had decided that the building up of American influence in China was contingent on the investment of American capital, and he had enjoyed some illuminating practical experience of the intrigues and the obstacles which dog the footsteps of the financier in the Far East. But after a preliminary miscarriage he was now making another start. He was carrying home a draft agreement between the Manchurian administration and a group of American financiers for the investment of American capital in Manchuria, which, if it were ever signed and its terms executed, would create a positive American interest in defending the independence and the inviolacy of China.

He had two obstacles to overcome before he could obtain the needed signatures to the draft. He must manage to convince a sufficiently wealthy group of bankers of the

value of the concession and he must secure for the enterprise the support of the American government. The first of these obstacles was already overcome in part. The draft agreement did not mention any particular American financial group, but it was well understood between Willard Straight and Tang-Shao-Yi that the former was to negotiate first with E. H. Harriman. The innovating mind of Mr. Harriman was a major premise in the whole transaction. Mr. Harriman was now ready to go ahead with any promising plan for railway development in Manchuria. Business was recovering from the panic of the preceding year and capital was released for the starting of new enterprises.

It looked as if the other obstacle might be more difficult to overcome. Yet overcome it must be immediately. Willard Straight was an official in the employment of the State Department. He could not negotiate with financiers for the investment of American capital in China unless the Secretary of State authorized the negotiation. As soon as he reached New York, Mr. William Phillips, then Chief of the Bureau of Far Eastern affairs, advised him that Mr. Harriman was waiting to see him. An interview followed in which Willard told Mr. Harriman of the draft agreement but refused to communicate its contents until the Secretary of State, Mr. Root, authorized him to do so. Upon Mr. Harriman's suggestion he wrote to Mr. Root, then at Clinton, New York, stating that Mr. Harriman wished to see the document. Two weeks passed without the receipt by him of any reply from Mr. Root. Thereupon he took the matter up with Mr. Robert Bacon, First Assistant Secretary of State, showed to Mr. Bacon the copy of the draft agreement and obtained Mr. Bacon's consent to submit the

contents of the document to Mr. Harriman. He went to New York for this purpose. Later, after his return to Washington, he had an interview with Secretary Root to whom also he communicated the terms of the proposed agreement.

There was manifestly some hesitation on Mr. Root's part in lending official support to the project; and the grounds of his hesitation developed in the course of Willard's interviews with him and with Mr. Bacon. The Secretary was disposed to back up an enterprise which looked towards American entrance into Manchuria by means of the "open door," but he was at the time negotiating an agreement with Japan, and he did not want to assume an attitude or to lend vigorous assistance to a project which would arouse Japanese opposition. While, consequently, he had no objection to the submission of Tang's plan to Mr. Harriman and he was willing to approve of it from the point of view of American national interest, he did not wish Mr. Harriman to venture in as the result of any positive encouragement from the government. The initiative and the responsibility were to be Mr. Harriman's. The State Department was to play the part of a complacent abettor. It is important to bear in mind the limits of Secretary Root's support at this time and to remember its relation to the whole chain of events. The attitude of the American government changed later, but it was not the originator of the plan for seeking the extension of American influence in China by suggesting or by urging the investment of American capital. The initiative and the energy came from two individuals, Edward Harriman and Willard Straight.

Mr. Harriman was favorably impressed by the proposed agreement and asked Straight to discuss the terms of the

loan with his bankers, Messrs. Kuhn, Loeb and Company. A series of interviews followed, culminating on November 2nd, when Mr. Jacob H. Schiff and Mr. Otto Kahn informed Straight, then acting Chief of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department, that they were prepared to take up the question of a Manchurian loan on the basis of the Tang memorandum. He was authorized to advise Tang of their willingness to negotiate. Tang was to arrive in Honolulu towards the middle of November on his way to America. Willard cabled to him at that place about the successful reception of his overtures. It looked for a moment as if the apparently serious obstacles had almost miraculously disappeared.

As a matter of fact, however, the enterprise was still very far from success. Tang's journey to this country was, as I explained in the last chapter, taken ostensibly for the purpose of thanking the American government for remitting the Boxer indemnity, but really for that of negotiating the loan and, if possible, of having the remitted indemnity applied to the economic development of Manchuria. Its success was contingent, not only upon his ability to unearth American political and financial support for his project, but also upon a continuation of the confidence reposed in him by his own government. He was of the party of Yuan-Shi-Kai, then Minister of Foreign Affairs and representative among other things of the nationalist Chinese resistance to Japanese penetration. If Yuan fell he would fall too. When he arrived in Honolulu he received news from China as discouraging as the news from America was encouraging. Towards the middle of November, both the Empress Dowager and the Emperor Kuang Hsu suddenly died. Their deaths seriously compromised the position of Yuan-Shi-Kai and

Willard Straight in 1908

consequently the credentials of Tang-Shao-Yi as a negotiator. It raised a mountain of unforeseen obstacles in the path of the Manchurian Loan.

In the meantime the Japanese were assisting fate in preventing the Loan from being consummated. At the end of October Baron Takahira, Japanese Minister to Washington, had suggested to President Roosevelt and Secretary Root that in order to prevent future difficulty between Japan and the United States in the Pacific, the governments of the two countries should interchange notes regarding the preservation of the "open door" in China. As the note was finally published, it recorded the desire of both countries to encourage the free and peaceable development of their commerce on the Pacific Ocean, their firm determination "to support by all pacific means at their disposal the independence and integrity of China and the principle of equal opportunity" and their intention "to maintain the existing *status quo* in the region above mentioned." But in the original draft, so I am informed, as submitted by Baron Takahira, the phrase regarding the "territorial integrity" of China which had appeared in the previous diplomatic interchanges about the "open door" was omitted. It was only with some difficulty that Secretary Root induced Baron Takahira to include this phrase in the final drafts. The Japanese Minister also pressed to have the note signed promptly—which meant prior to the arrival of Tang-Shao-Yi in Washington. After considerable difficulty the administration was persuaded to postpone the actual signature until the day on which the Chinese emissary was due. He reached Washington on November 30th. Secretary Root showed him the notes on the noon of that day and they were signed at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Willard Straight and Tang both firmly believed that the so-called Root-Takahira agreement was an attempt on the part of Japan to convince the Chinese of the existence of confidential relations between the United States and Japan and of the hopelessness of securing American assistance against Japanese penetration. The significant and dangerous phrase in the agreement concerned their intention "to maintain the *status quo*" in China. If some definition of the *status quo* had accompanied the phrase, the document might have helped to clear up the ambiguity in the comparative policy of the two Powers with respect to China, but in the absence of such a definition the exchange of the notes had a diplomatic effect which was favorable to Japanese interests and harmful to those of China and of this country. Japan was actually engaged in establishing in Southern Manchuria an exclusive sphere of influence. America had a legal and a moral right to resist Japanese penetration, to increase her own influence in that part of China and by so doing to assist China in preventing the aggression from taking place. When this government agreed to maintain the *status quo*, its action could be made to look like the grant to Japan of a free hand in Manchuria; and the phrase about the "open door" did nothing to abate this impression. It had come to have a ceremonial meaning which was not allowed to interfere with any amount of indirect economic privilege and penetration.

Willard Straight's diary under the date of February 2nd, 1910, contains the following entry which indicates the way in which both he and Tang-Shao-Yi looked back on these happenings a year or more later.

"Went to Tientsin. Saw Tang who seemed much better. He was about to take leave to go south. Said there was little chance of Yuan's coming back. He himself

would not go to Peking with the present crowd in power. When I told him that the Japanese called him an adroit diplomat in stirring up all this row, as the result of his mission to the U. S., he sighed and said that they were better than he. They had secured the interchange of notes by the time he arrived. That was a bad business. As I think it over now, I am sure that Tang had something big up his sleeve and that this reluctance to discuss the Loan and his apathy when he arrived were due to his feeling that he had been forestalled, that he had never been given a chance. This, like the Korean withdrawal, was a terrible diplomatic blunder to be laid to the door of T. R."

The effect on the Chinese nationalists of the Root-Takahira notes was discouraging. Mr. Tang, an impressionable and easily disconcerted man, was much depressed. He had every reason to be. The worst was happening at home. On the death of Kuang Hsu a nephew was named as his successor and his brother Prince Chun appointed Regent. The Regent disliked Yuan-Shi-Kai and wanted only a good excuse to break him. Yuan was holding his office on the strength of the expected success of Tang's mission to America. He promised that Tang would secure American support sufficient to counteract Japanese aggression in Manchuria. The Japanese in Peking promptly used the Root-Takahira notes to prove the failure of Tang's negotiations, to undermine Yuan, to cause his dismissal from office and finally to have Tang recalled. They could claim with sufficient plausibilty that the United States instead of proposing to support China against Japan had bound itself to a policy of friendly non-interference.

The Regent, however, did not dismiss Yuan-Shi-Kai until early in January, and in the meantime Tang had be-

gun his negotiations. But he began them in Washington with the administration rather than with the bankers in New York. He considered the securing of a portion of the remitted Boxer indemnity for the service of the Loan to be the most important part of his task. Owing to many matters of detail which required to be settled, it was not until the end of December that he arranged with the administration the procedure to be followed in remitting the indemnity. During the same weeks he had incidentally suggested to the Secretary of State a plan for a much larger loan accompanied by a revision of the Chinese fiscal system in which he and all Chinese reformers were keenly interested. This larger loan amounting to as much as two or three hundred million dollars was to provide the means to improve the currency of China and to abolish the miscellaneous levies on domestic commerce and production. At the same time she was to be allowed to increase her customs tariff in accordance with her treaty engagements. It was the opinion of Willard Straight that if Tang had actually settled to his own satisfaction the disposition of the remitted indemnity and if he had considered favorable the chance of securing the larger loan, he would not have proceeded with the more limited Manchurian project. At no time did Tang personally negotiate with Mr. Harriman or with Kuhn, Loeb and Company. Throughout December 1908 Straight acted as the medium of communication between him and the bankers. The subject of communication continued to be for the most part the Manchurian Loan, but Tang also expressed a preference that American bankers furnish the capital for the proposed Currency Reform Loan. The matter was discussed in a very general way with Messrs. Harriman, and Kuhn, Loeb and Company, and they had expressed their readiness to consider also the larger enterprise.

Straight undertook these activities with the full knowledge of the Department. In fact, early in December the Secretary of State with the approval of the President explicitly authorized him to introduce Mr. Tang to the American bankers and to assist in negotiating for China a Currency Loan of sufficient size. But when Yuan-Shi-Kai fell early in January all these negotiations came abruptly to an end. Tang did not linger long in America after his recall. He left almost immediately for London, and stopped only two or three days in New York en route. During these days he called upon Mr. Harriman at his house. Thus the two men did not actually meet each other until after the negotiation was over.

In the meantime, however, another group of negotiations was started which looked in a somewhat different direction. The reader will remember that Mr. Harriman's interest in Chinese railways started from their availability as a possible link in a transportation system which stretched around the world, and that the Japanese had shattered his original hope of obtaining control of the Chinese Eastern and South Manchurian Railways which ran from Harbin on the Trans-Siberian line to Port Arthur. These railways under the Treaty of Portsmouth were under Japanese control as far north as Kuangchentzu and under Russian control from there on. Their future prosperity was vitally affected by the proposed Manchurian Loan because the Loan was in part to be used for the purpose of paralleling them further to the west and giving to the Siberian railway a more direct connection with Peking and the rest of China.

In November Mr. Jacob H. Schiff of Kuhn, Loeb and Company, who was in communication with Mr. Gregory Wilenkin, formerly Russian financial agent in the United

States and then Russian agent in Japan, was advised that Russia might be willing to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway. At Mr. Schiff's request Willard wrote a memorandum as to the basis on which the whole line from Port Arthur to Harbin might be acquired by anticipating the provisions of the original agreement of 1896 between the Russian and the Chinese governments which had arranged for the possible future repurchase of the line. At the same time Mr. Schiff himself wrote to Baron Shibusawa, who, while not in the Japanese government, was in a position to undertake a confidential negotiation, to inquire whether in view of the Russian disposition to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway, there was any chance of a renewal of the earlier negotiations with the Japanese to sell their South Manchurian road. The fact of this additional negotiation was communicated to Tang by Willard Straight, and was welcomed by him. He was, however, sceptical about the result of any future discussion of the plan with the Japanese government. His scepticism was justified. Through Baron Shibusawa Mr. Schiff had definitely proposed to Baron Takahashi, head of the Yohokama Specie Bank, that Japan sell its railroad to an American syndicate; and early in January he received from the Baron a cablegram stating that Japan would not consider the sale of the South Manchurian Railway and advising him to abandon all further activity in this connection.

By January 15th it looked as if every phase of the negotiation had run into insuperable obstacles. Yet Mr. Harriman, although he was already handicapped by the illness which was soon to kill him, was not discouraged. There was some chance of renewing direct negotiations with China and he was still hopeful of putting to good use the dispo-

sition on the part of Russia to sell out. Neither he nor Kuhn, Loeb and Company were willing to abandon the idea of participating in the profits of railway development in China. But if they were to continue their work in this field they must make some arrangement to transact business in Peking. The mission of Tang-Shao-Yi to Washington which was the occasion of the first negotiation was a sporadic fact which could not be repeated. They must seek Chinese concessions in China rather than in Washington.

After the failure of Tang's mission Willard remained in Washington as temporary Chief of the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. In the course of the winter, Mr. William Phillips, the permanent head of the Bureau returned, and for some months it was a question as to what Willard should do. The Department proposed to send him back to Mukden. Mr. Harriman wished to have him appointed to Peking as American Minister. On March 4th Mr. Taft had succeeded Mr. Roosevelt as President. A new assignment of diplomatic offices was in order and Mr. Harriman expected to bring to bear sufficient influence to secure the Chinese post for Willard Straight. Willard himself, however, was opposed to the idea. He was only twenty-nine years old, and he realized that his appointment over the heads of older and more experienced men would react undesirably on the Service. Finally early in May, Kuhn, Loeb and Company, convinced of the necessity of having a representative in Peking, offered to send Straight there to resume direct with the Chinese government the negotiations which had failed during the fall. At first Willard refused. He was loath to quit the public service. Later he accepted a similar offer which came not from Kuhn, Loeb and Company alone, but from a combination of American bankers

which was formed to finance any concessions for railroads which American capitalists might obtain from the Chinese government. This combination consisted of J. P. Morgan and Company, to whom the management of the business was entrusted, Kuhn, Loeb and Company, The First National Bank and the National City Bank and Edward H. Harriman.

There was an important reason for the formation at this moment of the larger group. The possible area of American participation in Chinese development had suddenly increased. Hitherto all the negotiations for a loan were the direct result of Willard's intimate personal association with the Manchurian administration and of Mr. Harriman's peculiar interest in building or buying railways in North Eastern China, which might tie in with his grandiose project for a transportation girdle of the world. There was no proposal under consideration to build with American capital any but Manchurian railways, and two individuals, Messrs. Harriman and Straight, had originated the plan and were chiefly instrumental in pushing it. The State Department had contented itself with a negative acquiecence and did not assume any more responsibility than it could help. But suddenly it discovered that American interests in Chinese development were not limited to Manchuria, but extended also to the Central and Southern provinces. The occasion for this discovery was the signature in May between the Chinese government and bankers representing British, French and German capital of a contract for the construction of the so-called Hukuang Railways, which were to extend westward and southward from Hankow on the Yangtse kiang as a centre. When the signature of this contract was announced the Department of State recalled

that the Chinese government had in 1904 promised to give American capital a chance to participate in the financing of at least one of these proposed Hukuang Railways. It was the Department of State itself, acting in this instance from political motives and on its own initiative rather than the prompting of private interest, which called the attention of the Chinese government to the violation of its promise and insisted on American participation in the loan.

When the Department of State acts, however, its action is traceable to the agency of some individual and in this case the man who stirred it to action seems to have been Willard Straight. It was on May 5th that he refused Kuhn, Loeb and Company's offer to send him to China as their representative. His diary under the date of May 24th contains the following entry: "Telegram sent to Peking which started the row about the Chinese loan. Bill tried to ask a question merely, but with H. W. approving, my telegram went, telling Rockhill, if press reports were true, to take immediate action." "Bill" may be William Phillips but may also be President Taft, and H. W. is, of course, Huntington Wilson, who had become First Assistant Secretary of State. If Willard did not originate the plan of asserting the American claim he certainly was a party to the enterprise and dictated the form of the protest.

I shall reserve for the next chapter a more detailed account of the nature of the interest which the American government had obtained and preserved in the Hukuang Railways. What I wish particularly to call attention to here is the new factor which the initiative of the State Department introduced into the negotiations and the effect of this new factor upon the character of the financial backing which was needed for the purpose of carrying on the investment

of American capital in China. As long as the initiative remained with Edward Harriman and Willard Straight, Mr. Harriman was in a position to name his own bankers and to exclude other banking houses from participation in the business. When, however, the initiative came from the State Department, as in the case of the Hukuang Railways, and when that Department had itself in effect proposed to a group of American financiers the desirability of certain investments in China as a matter of American national policy, the Secretary of State would naturally be anxious to avoid the accusation of favoritism in the selection of the group. He would need to call to his aid a more representative cross section of American finance than any one firm, no matter how rich and resourceful it could possibly be. The formation of the larger group, composing in addition to Kuhn, Loeb and Company, J. P. Morgan and Company, the National City and the First National Banks, was consequently the logical result of the more important part played by the State Department in urging proposed investments in Southern China compared to the part it had played in relation to the Manchurian Loan.

The formation of the larger group was a matter of prudence on the part of the bankers as well as of political necessity on the part of the Government. When a negotiation of this kind is under way, it is always embarrassing and frequently fatal for a financial group which is keenly interested in the project and both able and determined to push it through, to be exposed to competition from other groups or from individual promoters who frequently make speculative bids for the proposed concessions. It is a wise precaution on their part to eliminate in advance responsible competition by associating with themselves the other bankers in their

own country who possess the prestige and machinery needed to sell large blocks of securities issued by foreign governments. Then, if an individual promoter does put in a bid, they can feel tolerably sure that he will not control the resources sufficient to finance the concession. In almost every large negotiation of this kind an individual promoter does at some stage of the proceedings jump in and submit a bid which is intended to upset the transaction. He would almost always succeed were not the more responsible bidders able to demonstrate the doubtful ability of their more speculative and reckless rival to finance his proposal.

It was considerations of this kind which resulted in the formation of the first American Group. They appealed as strongly to Messrs. Harriman and Straight as they did to the State Department, and Mr. Harriman himself was an active and indispensable agent in getting the Group together. It included the three or four most powerful financial interests in the country, but it was formed hastily and its chief weakness was not that it was a representative combination of American financiers, but that it was not sufficiently representative. It omitted banks and bankers in and out of New York which could fairly claim to be included in a financial group that was being used by the State Department as an agent of a policy of the American government in China. The validity of this criticism has since been recognized. The financial combination which represents this country in the present Consortium includes a much more numerous and widely distributed selection of American banks.

After the combination was formed early in June, Willard agreed to become its representative in China. No matter how much he preferred public service, he could not refuse to

act on behalf of a group which was being used by his own government as a semi-official instrument. Its formation was equivalent to a genuine start in the realization of his own ideas and plans. The government in the persons both of President Taft and Secretary Knox was now positively interested in promoting American influence in China by means of American investment. It proposed and had begun to support this policy with all the diplomatic resources of the State Department and it had invited and secured the cooperation of a peculiarly powerful group of financiers. They had offered to Straight a position near the centre of the organization, which afforded him an opportunity to influence its behavior. He was returning to China as an accredited American ambassador to the most important country on the frontier of international finance. This position he had earned for himself, in spite of his youth, his financial inexperience and his lack of powerful connections. Starting from somewhere behind scratch, his energy, the fearless magnitude of his ideas, his grasp of pertinent detail and his sympathetic and confident personality had in a few years won for him the chance to play a major part in the drama in whose outcome he himself was most vitally interested.

CHAPTER IX

THE DIPLOMACY OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCE

I

ON June 29th, 1909, Willard Straight sailed from New York for London en route to his ultimate destination in Peking. But before going on to China he had important business to transact in Europe. The financial groups of the several countries which were interested in the Hukuang Railways had called a conference in London to discuss and, if possible, to adjust the embarrassments which the unwelcome addition of an American member to their happy family had created. It was Straight's first business to serve as the mouthpiece, at this conference, of the American parvenu. Moreover, his chief, Mr. Harriman, had already sailed for the European continent, and was then engaged not only in a vain attempt to recover health and strength but in beginning certain delicate and important negotiations about the Chinese Eastern Railway.

In order to explain the circumstances of Willard's mission to London, I shall have to digress for a moment and give some account of the status at that time of the Hukuang Railways. The story of this concession is one of the longest and most intricate in the tortuous history of foreign investments in China, but it is also one of the most illuminating. It exhibits in full pungency the intrinsic difficulties and the

conflicting and often sinister interests which render the securing and carrying out of a Chinese railway concession an almost insoluble problem in political and financial calculus. It deserves the closest attention from those who seek to understand the conditions under which European capital was being exported to China during the years preceding the Great War.

The Hukuang Railways was the name given to several proposed lines which were to run west from Hankow towards Szechuan and south towards Canton. The Chinese provinces through which these proposed roads would operate were situated in the densely populated southern part of China, the district which was included partly in the French and partly in the British spheres of influence. But Americans, so it happened, possessed from the start an interest both in the Hankow-Canton and in the Hankow-Szechuan lines. In 1898 the Peking government had granted to the American-China Development Company, a corporation in which Mr. Calvin Brice was the dominating personality, a concession for the first of these lines—the chief competitor being a Belgian syndicate. This company went to the expense of making two surveys and of building some thirty miles of road from Canton north, but there it stopped. Mr. Brice died, the Belgian syndicate bought an interest in the Development Company for the purpose apparently of sabotaging the project. The rights and responsibilities of the several parties under the contract were ambiguous and provoked sharp differences of opinion between the company and the Chinese government. In the meanwhile the work was suspended. Finally, in 1905, Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan found a way out of the impasse by purchasing this Belgian interest in the American company, but even

then nothing was done to resume construction. Mr. Morgan was not at that time interested in Chinese investments. He therefore entered into negotiations with the Chinese which resulted in the cancellation of the contract and the purchase of all the property of the Development Company by the Chinese for $6,750,000 gold.

The Chinese provincial government which bought out the rights and property of the American company could not, however, when the time arrived to pay for its purchase, obtain the necessary cash from Chinese sources. The Viceroy of Hankow, Chang-Chih-Tung, was obliged to borrow the money elsewhere, which he did by arranging for a loan of £1,350,000 from the government of the colony of Hong-Kong. He obtained the loan only on the condition that if China subsequently needed to raise money abroad for the construction of the line, she would give preference to British capital, other conditions being equal. For some years the Chinese provincial authorities tried in vain to secure in China the capital required for further construction. In the meantime the British and Chinese Corporation had worked steadily to persuade the provincial authorities to let it furnish the money for the building of the road; and in exerting this pressure the representatives of British and French finance in China worked together under an agreement to share the burdens and the profits of the concession.

These negotiations were proceeding slowly but apparently prosperously when in January 1909, it was announced that Chang-Chih-Tung, who had become a Secretary of State at Peking, had signed a preliminary contract for this concession with Mr. Henry Cordes, who represented in China the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank. The Chinese government had upset the apple-cart by allowing an agent of German finance

to bid for a concession in what were supposed to be the English and French spheres of influence. It was one of those sudden diversions which the weak Chinese Foreign Office was always making in order to sow dissension among the eager money-lending nations and at the same time to secure, if possible, better terms for itself.

The British, of course, immediately and vigorously protested, but the protest did not succeed in dislodging the Germans from the strategic position they had occupied. The Chinese answered by pointing out that the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank had offered them a better bargain than had the British and Chinese Corporation. They had a perfect right to award the concession to the Germans. They had promised to prefer English capital only in case the terms offered by it were as good as the terms offered by German or other capital. The British had made the mistake of not anticipating possible competition from the Germans and providing against it. Very reluctantly they were finally obliged to pay for the mistake by permitting German finance a share in the concession equal to that of the existing partners.

The banking Groups representing the three countries began a negotiation for the division of the concession. It resulted in a compromise. The Germans surrendered their right to float a loan for the Hankow-Canton Railway in return for a share in a much larger loan, whose proceeds would be used to construct a line running west from Hankow to Szechuan as well as south to Canton. Under the agreement the Germans would name the chief engineer and act as purchasing agents for the Hupeh section of the Szechuan Railway. The British were to perform a similar service for the line to Canton. The French were to supply

a third of the capital and to share equally in the five per-cent commission paid on the purchase of materials bought in Europe, but they were not to have engineering direction of any part of the construction unless the Szechuan lines were extended from Ichang to Changtu. The terms on which China was to grant both of these concessions were practically the same as those which the Germans had obtained for the Canton line.

No surviving American interest was involved by the concession of the Canton line to the German bank, but the inclusion of the Szechuan extension within the scope of the arrangement ignored a promise made by the Chinese to the American government. On September 27th, 1904, Mr. Conger, American Minister to China, reported that he had been approached by an American syndicate with a view to securing a railway concession from some point in the province of Szechuan to Hankow. He laid the matter before the Wai-Wu-Pu (the Chinese Foreign Office), which replied that the British Minister had also asked for a similar concession but that probably the railway would be built by Chinese capital. If, however, the Chinese authorities should wish to employ foreign capital they would notify both the British and American Ministers. They promised to give British and American capital a prior and an equal opportunity to bid for the road. The answer followed the usual Chinese rule of evading an embarrassing immediate demand with a promise for the future and with playing off one group of foreign intruders against another.

About the middle of May 1909, the American State Department learned of the proposed agreement among the French, English and German bankers and on May 24th cabled to Mr. Rockhill, U. S. Minister at Peking, a mes-

sage the reference to which in Willard's diary I have already quoted. Mr. Rockhill was instructed to "inform the Foreign Office that this government holds that this assurance (the one given to Mr. Conger) guarantees to American and British capital the preference in bidding for any foreign loan floated for this purpose." The Wai-Wu-Pu did not return a very encouraging answer to the protest. It gave the Americans to understand that they had arrived too late for any share in the feast. On June 6th representatives of the Chinese government, ignoring the American objection, initialed an agreement with the European bankers which embodied the results of the negotiations among the three financial groups. But the American State Department was very much in earnest. It knew and made full use of the strength of its position. It brought every possible pressure to bear in London, Berlin and Paris as well as in Peking to prevent the final closing of the transaction without the grant of an equal participation to American capital. In fact the American representative at Peking was instructed to intimate to the Chinese government that the ignoring of the American demand might alter the present American attitude towards its share of the Boxer indemnity. This pressure was finally successful. On June 24th, Mr. Henry Prather Fletcher, Chargé at Peking, into whose hands the conduct of the negotiations devolved after Minister Rockhill's departure for Petersburg, was able to report an assurance from the Chinese Foreign Office that it "has notified the representatives of the groups that the loan will not be concluded unless the bankers settle with the American Group." The American Group with J. P. Morgan and Company at its head, had in the meantime been organized and its representative in Peking, Willard Straight, was sent

to London in order to arrange for American participation in the transaction.

The protest of the Department of State was not, it should be added, based exclusively on the promise given to Mr. Conger in 1904. The terms of the proposed loan raised questions concerning the internal fiscal policy of China about which Americans, as friends and well-wishers of the Chinese, had reason to be solicitous. The internal revenues of the provinces through which the proposed railroads passed were pledged as security for the Hukuang Loan. The American government in a treaty signed in 1903 had promised to support China in her endeavors to secure an increase of the customs tariff, and so to enable the Chinese government to abolish the pernicious and oppressive likin. It had consistently kept this promise. The Secretary of State in his representations to the Chinese government insisted that the pledging of the likin revenue as security for the Loan "makes it of the greatest importance that the United States should participate therein in order that this government may be in a position to exercise an influence equal to that of the other three Powers in any question arising through the pledging of these levies and to enable the United States at the proper time again to support China in her endeavor to secure the abolition of likin and an increase in the customs tariff."

Such was in general the situation when Willard Straight sailed for London on June 29th, 1909. He arrived on July 5th and had his first conference with the European bankers on July 7th. In a letter to Mr. Harriman, written a few days later, Willard gives a cheerful account of what happened at the Conference. "Owing," he says, "to the fact that we demanded participation at such a late date after

the others had almost concluded their negotiations, we were willing to waive our one half interest in the one road in return for an equal share of the loan under discussion. Nor did we insist on coming in on quite an equal footing with the others. We waived our rights to engineers and auditors, holding out only for a quarter participation as regards financing and preference for American materials. Our European friends, however, offered us only a quarter share in the portion of the present loan to be used for the Hupeh section of the Hankow-Szechuan Railway, i. e., £2,500,000 with the understanding that should China authorize a loan for the extension to Changtu we should be given rights equal to those of the most favored of the other three Groups. This we could not, of course, accept. We recommended a compromise to New York, however, which we thought might save the face of the others and at the same time preserve our own. We suggested that we take 20 percent participation or £1,100,000 of the present loan and be given equal preference for American materials, and the same assurance which they had offered regarding the quarter share in the entire line when it was built to Changtu." This proposed compromise he communicated to his chiefs in New York, who in turn urged it upon the State Department in Washington.

But the State Department had its prestige to consider and would not listen to any compromise. The United States must have equal participation or none. It declared its position in a sharp communication dated July 9th from Acting Secretary Wilson to Ambassador Reid, the burden of which he was to transmit to the British Foreign Office. In this message the State Department assumed responsibility for the general basis of the negotiation as a matter of American

national policy. The dispatch ended by announcing that "this government will not recede from its position; that if the banking syndicate which undertook to sustain the American policy of equal participation ignores the national aspect of the transaction or fails to coöperate in the broad purpose in view the government will seek other instruments to secure proper American recognition; that it should be clearly understood that this government is interested purely for broad national reasons; that the government alone has any rights in the matter; and that it holds such rights in trust for the good of general American interests in China." As a result of the stiff attitude assumed by the American Group under orders from the State Department the conference adjourned on July 8th *sine die*.

American inflexibility did not in the beginning have the desired effect. On the contrary it resulted in increased pressure by the European banking Groups on the Chinese government to close with them and to dispense entirely with American participation. On July 13th Chargé Fletcher reported to the State Department that, inasmuch as the inter-group conference in London had adjourned *sine die*, Chang-Chih-Tung had written to the Wai-Wu-Pu urging the immediate conclusion of the existing agreement. There was grave and immediate danger of a miscarriage of the whole negotiation. The Chinese government and the European bankers were ready to grant the American Group a twenty-five percent interest in the Szechuan line, but wished to exclude them from any share in the Canton concession. The Americans claimed a fifty percent interest in the Szechuan line, on the basis of the promise to Mr. Conger, but were willing to trade the claim for a twenty-five percent participation in both concessions. It looked for a moment

as if by insisting on equal participation they would fail entirely. Evidently Willard's preference for discussing something less than a quarter share was the result of a fear that insistence on equal participation would result in total exclusion.

Total exclusion might well have followed, had not President Taft himself by a remarkable and unprecedented *tour de force* saved the prestige of the administration. On July 15th he cabled to Prince Chun, Regent of China, stating that he was disturbed at the reports of prejudiced opposition to the arrangement by the Chinese government for equal participation for the United States in the Hukuang loan and that his interest in the matter was due chiefly to a desire on his part to serve China. "I have," he cabled, "an intense personal interest in making the use of American capital in the development of China an instrument for the promotion of the welfare of China, and an increase in her national prosperity without entanglements or creating embarrassments affecting the growth of her independent political power and the preservation of her territorial integrity." His interference was effective. The Chinese government agreed to observe the principle of equal participation in every respect. The seat of the negotiation was transferred from Europe to Peking and in its political aspect placed in charge of Henry Fletcher as the representative of the Department of State, and of Willard Straight as representative of the American Banking Group.

Before Willard started for China he had his last conference with Mr. Harriman who, as I have already stated, had gone to Europe partly for his health and partly in the hope of accomplishing something with the Russians in relation to the Chinese Eastern Railway. In June Mr. Harriman

had met in Paris M. Noetzlin, a Russian financier and chief of the Wagon Lits Company, and had suggested the organization of an international syndicate to buy the Chinese Eastern Railway. M. Noetzlin went to Petersburg to consult with the Russian Minister of Finance and after his return to Paris in August informed Mr. Harriman that M. Kokovtsoff was well disposed to the plan. In fact he was ready to recommend the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway, but wished first to make a trip to the Far East and look the ground over. Willard himself saw Mr. Harriman at Gastein on July 19th, 20th and 21st during the interval between these two interviews with M. Noetzlin. He has left no memorandum of what passed between them during this visit, but clearly they were both looking forward with high hopes to the early fruition of their plans.

In writing about their conversations to Mr. Henry P. Davison on July 21st, Mr. Harriman says: "Mr. Straight has been here a couple of days, going over Chinese matters, and I am giving him his last inspiration. . . . I fear you will all be disappointed in the outcome of Chinese matters. It is going to need patience and not too much must be expected and not too soon. I want to use Straight for some purposes of my own (not business) for which he will have plenty of time and do not want any one to know of it. In arranging with him for it I would like you to speak to Mr. Morgan and he and you to consent and so advise Straight. I want it without any condition and only Mr. Morgan and you to know. Of course nothing shall interfere with his obligations to the Group and I will pay any expense attached to my things. I would have done this whether or not the Group had taken Straight up.

"I fear the European Groups will resort to measures in

China which will not be creditable in methods of construction and dealing generally with the Chinese. I hope for purely American influence in some one thing so we can show them how to do it right and to get a real and lasting American influence."

The personal "purposes" to which Mr. Harriman referred in this letter were his plan to purchase the Chinese Eastern Railway as one means of bringing pressure to bear on the Japanese to sell the South Manchurian Railway. Mr. Harriman was still fascinated by the vision of a transportation system which girdled the world and of which a railroad, running from some point on the Trans-Siberian line to an ice-free port on the Pacific, was a necessary link. Hitherto the Japanese had frustrated his plan by refusing to sell the South Manchurian line. He was now maneuvring either to compel them to consent or, if compulsion failed, to purchase the right to build a parallel road which would serve the same purpose. His first object was to divide Russia from Japan by persuading the Russian government to sell its section of the Manchurian Railways. His second was to secure from the Chinese government the concession for a wholly new road which would run from Chinchow at the head of the Gulf of Pechili to the Trans-Siberian and on to Aigun on the Amur. This proposed line was situated more than one hundred miles to the west of the South Manchurian road, and would not compete with it except for through traffic. He hoped by securing this concession to place himself in a much more favorable position to negotiate with the Japanese and at the same time, if the negotiation failed, to have another string to his bow. To Willard he confided the important preliminary task of inducing the Chinese government to grant to the American Group a con-

cession for the Chinchow-Aigun road. It was Mr. Harriman's Manchurian schemes which were responsible for the dispatch of Straight to China even more than the negotiation for an equal share in the Hukuang Railways loan.

Willard's host at Gastein was a very sick man, much sicker than either of them knew. Mr. Harriman's death was soon to sever their association; and its severance from this cause was a grave personal and public misfortune. For they were coöperating to carry out a really statesmanlike conception which if Mr. Harriman had lived would have had a better chance of success. The conception to which I refer is not that of an around-the-world system of transportation. It was the idea of the purchase by an international syndicate of the Manchurian Railways and, as a consequence of this purchase, of their effective neutralization. The recovery for the Chinese nation of the Manchurian Railways system was essential to any assertion of the economic and political independence of China. Until it took place the Chinese could never become the masters of their own house. The most effective way to contribute to the welfare of China was to work for the abolition of that grip on the vitals of Chinese national economy which the original railroad concession to Russia in Manchuria had authorized.

The emancipation of China from bondage was not Mr. Harriman's motive in proposing to internationalize the ownership of the Chinese Eastern Railroad. From his point of view internationalization was simply the method of extinguishing Japanese interference with his plans which was most likely to succeed. But to Straight who had watched in Mukden the effects of the ownership and control of the Manchurian roads by foreign governments and who was

warmly interested in the independence and welfare of the Chinese the plan made for other reasons a vivid personal appeal. It helped to accomplish the political result in which he was most interested by a cure which penetrated to the source of the most malignant of the many flourishing attacks on Chinese independence.

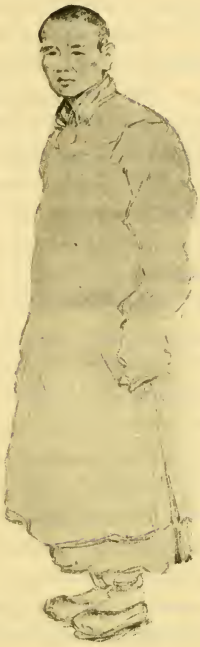
He had reason to be thankful for the combination of accident and intention to which he owed his association with Mr. Harriman. The latter was the only financier in the United States with sufficient inspiration to conceive a plan of this kind and with sufficient invention to feel around successfully for a promising method of carrying it out. In picking Willard Straight to help him and in placing increasing confidence in such a comparatively inexperienced young man, he had found someone who possessed the vision to understand a novel idea of great scope and whose qualities rendered him capable of dealing intelligently with the obstacles to its realization. The older and the younger man were in this respect kindred spirits. Mr. Harriman needed Willard almost as much as Willard needed Mr. Harriman. They were extraordinarily qualified to supplement each other in providing a daring innovation in international politics and finance with a chance of success in a stubborn and hostile world.

From Gastein Willard returned to London, which he reached on July 28th. There he had a most encouraging interview with the representative of the English Group whom he describes in his diary as virtually surrendering. Two days later he was sojourning in Berlin, conferring with the representatives of the German Group, awaiting orders to proceed to Peking and flushed by his participation in large affairs and the flourishing prospects for his own future

and for the future of his cherished schemes. On August 5th he received his orders and started that night for St. Petersburg. By Thursday the 19th he was in Peking.

II

The Hukuang Railways Loan was the first business to claim his attention. Mr. Fletcher had begun negotiations before his arrival with Mr. Hillier representing the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, with Mr. Cordes of the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank and with M. Casenave representing the Banque de L'Indo-Chine. They had drawn up the basis of an agreement, admitting American capitalists to one quarter of the entire Loan whose total was increased from £5,500,000 to £6,000,000. It was understood, however, that the American quarter was to take the form of a fifty percent participation in the £3,000,000 allotted to the construction of the Hupeh section of the Szechuan line. Subsequently, after Willard's arrival in Peking, a disagreement arose regarding the appointment of the purchasing agents for materials which, after some delay, was finally adjusted. The Chinese government was pressing very hard for an agreement, because Chang-Chih-Tung, who had charge of the negotiation for the Chinese and who throughout his career had been actively interested in these railroads, was fatally sick and wished to close the transaction before he died. They all assembled on September 23rd for the purpose of closing, but at the last moment the British representatives refused to sign. This was the first of a series of postponements, which resulted finally in more than a year's delay in the consummation of the agreement.



Chinese sketch made by Willard Straight after his return to Peking in 1908

For the present, however, I shall drop the story of the negotiations for the Hukuang Loan and follow through to the end the more interesting and politically important business of the Manchurian Railways. When Willard arrived in Peking, the Chinese government approached him with a proposal to revive the project of a Manchurian bank and a Manchurian-Mongolian connection with the Trans-Siberian Railroad. This was of course the project in which he was most keenly interested, both on his own and Mr. Harriman's account. But apart from personal reasons, the securing of an independent concession would enhance the prestige and strengthen the hands of the American Group in their general negotiations with the European groups. The bankers who represented British, French and German interests were operating from bases which consisted of special agreements with the Chinese government or special territorial concessions. The American bankers on the other hand, could not

call to their assistance the leverage of any powerful special political or financial interest. They did not even represent a trustworthy or capacious market for Chinese securities in America. They were operating upon the slim support of a vague promise given to an American Minister five years earlier and of the goodwill of the Chinese government. It had taken the personal interposition of President Taft to secure for them even this precarious standing. If they could obtain a special concession of unimpeachable authenticity and value in Manchuria, they would be far better equipped to bargain over an equal share in the Hukuang Railways and other concessions elsewhere in China.

In the conferences which began about the Chinchow-Aigun concession, Willard did not consider himself free to negotiate without reference to a prior obligation on the part of the Manchurian administration. In November 1907, the reader will remember, the Chinese had entered into a contract with Pauling and Company, a firm of English contractors, for the construction of a railroad from Hsinmintun on the Imperial Railways to Fakumen with the right of subsequent extension to Tsitsihar. The proposed Chinchow-Aigun road followed a line to the west of this earlier project, but the two ran so close together that the former contractor would be entitled to some consideration on the part of his successor. Moreover, before Willard returned to China there had been some negotiations about this very line between Pauling and Company, and the Chinese government. Lord ffrench, the representative of the English firm, was in Peking when Willard arrived and the two men soon reached an understanding which looked in the direction of the financing of the project by the American Group and the construction of the road by the English firm.

As the Chinese government was not only willing but eager, the negotiations proceeded rapidly toward an event. As early as September 15th Willard cabled to New York for authority to close. On September 27th he had expected to sign a contract in Peking with the Imperial government, but opposition appeared at the last moment. The next day he hurried to Mukden in the hope of expediting a decision in Peking by reaching a preliminary agreement with the provincial authorities upon whose interest in the plan he could count. In this he was successful. On October 2nd he formally agreed on behalf of the American Group to finance some 700 miles of railroad which were to be constructed by Pauling and Company. The agreement, however, was not final or irrevocable on the part of either signatory. Neither Willard nor the Manchurian Viceroy had received plenary authority from their superiors.

The following extract from a letter dated Mukden, October 3rd, from Straight to J. P. Morgan and Company, explains fully the reasons which induced him to sign both for Pauling and Company and the American Group without having obtained their express consent. "On Friday night, October 1st, I received word through Mr. Fletcher that ffrench approved the agreement in principle but preferred to sign himself and would arrive on Sunday night. On Saturday morning, therefore, I notified the Viceroy that ffrench would be here and we would sign on Monday. At noon a yamen secretary came to inform me that the Viceroy wished to telegraph the text of the agreement to Peking for approval [before signing] and desired my views. I pointed out that I would have signed on Saturday had the Viceroy not made the change on Friday morning. The Secretary stated that the Viceroy was very angry, that he wished to

sign that day and could not understand why I had to wait for instructions nor why I suggested waiting for the arrival of Lord ffrench. I further pointed out that I had wired to you that the Viceroy would sign and then memorialize [ask Peking for a ratifying edict] and that if he should telegraph before signature it would be necessary to alter the agreement.

"The Secretary reported and returned in an hour. He said that the telegram had already been sent and that the Viceroy wished me to sign at once before he could receive a possibly unfavorable reply from Peking. A few minutes later the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs came on the same errand. He pointed out the risk of delay and urged me to conclude at once. Although not so stated I am convinced that the telegram to the Throne reported that the agreement had been or was about to be signed.

"When I left Peking we hardly expected to do more than to persuade the Viceroy to memorialize. Since he was prepared to take the risk I feared that to refuse signature would so prejudice him that a subsequent understanding might be impossible. In view of the situation I took the responsibility of acting without your instructions because ample time had been allowed for the receipt of a wire from you and none had come, because I felt the preliminary agreement did not irrevocably commit you and because ffrench and I were fully agreed in our previous conversation that it is sometimes necessary to act quickly to save a situation. I fully realize that I have exceeded my instructions. I feel, however, that in case you do not care to undertake this flotation you can withdraw from this agreement. I am prepared without question to accept in full the consequences of my action."

As this letter shows, Willard Straight had assumed a large measure of responsibility and risk in signing the agreement without any express authorization from New York. He wrote on the same day to Fletcher, who was coming to be his most intimate friend, that this, his first signature on behalf of the Group, was likely to be his last. His one backer in America who was keenly interested in the Chinchow-Aigun project, Mr. Harriman, had died. Willard had received news of his death on September 10th. It was a grievous loss to him both on account of his affection for Mr. Harriman and on account of the complete and exceptional understanding between them as to the scope and meaning of their Chinese railway projects. Even Mr. Harriman's own bankers, Kuhn, Loeb and Company, were not fully enlightened as to his ultimate plans and J. P. Morgan and Company, who had become the director of the American Group, did not grasp at that time the larger significance of the Chinchow-Aigun agreement, and the part which it promised to play in strengthening the hands of American political and financial diplomacy in China and the use which the administration was about to make of it. As cautious and responsible bankers they not unnaturally regarded it exclusively as a railroad project which they might be obliged to finance.

On October 8th the firm wrote to Willard stating that "while we appreciate the advantages which led you to the signature of the preliminary agreement of October 2nd, we do not wish to enter further or hurriedly into the undertaking before some definite results have been reached in the Hukuang agreement." In the same letter they confirmed their "distinct understanding that in signing this preliminary agreement you have not committed us to a point from

which we may not feel at liberty on sufficient grounds to withdraw." But they never took the action which Willard on the morning after evidently feared they would take. They never repudiated the agreement, and eventually they came to place an estimate upon its importance analogous to that of Willard himself. They came to see it, that is, as an indispensable and powerful weapon in the hands of the government in its contest for the assertion of the American national interest in China and for the liberation of the Chinese nation from its alien exploiters.*

As soon as he had received news of Mr. Harriman's death, Willard did what he could to impart some idea of the larger aspects of Mr. Harriman's plan to the members of the Group in New York. He cabled and wrote about it at some length both to J. P. Morgan and Company and to Kuhn, Loeb and Company. The best expression of his own idea of what it meant and what kind of action was needed for its success is contained in a letter to the late Jacob H. Schiff from which it is worth while to quote at length:

"The proposition (Mr. Harriman's plan) was as follows: The Russian government and the French interest in the Russo-Chinese Bank are not satisfied with the present policy and position of that institution into which a large German element has been introduced. It is proposed therefore either (a) to inject new life and thus oust German control or (b) to extend the activities of the semi-government Siberian Bank to Manchuria and China in order to check the growth of Japanese influence. In either case English and American,

*On Nov. 6th Mr. Henry P. Davison wrote to him after Willard had fully explained his reasons: "Your action in signing the agreement was entirely satisfactory. I think you did exactly the right thing and admire your action."

together with French capital, would be used to bolster waning Russian prestige in the Orient, besides ensuring for themselves the political support of the Russian government in their enterprises in Manchuria and Mongolia.

"Leaving Siberia out of the discussion, the most promising field for the Group's Eastern activities would be Manchuria and Mongolia. It should in these regions be possible to act as partners, not as lenders alone, for the political situation, particularly in the former, forces China to grant terms more favorable than could be secured elsewhere, while in neither region is popular sentiment, a growing obstacle to foreign investment in the South, an important factor.

"These being the premises, the following program is suggested:

I. Cooperating Anglo-American interests should, as already proposed, secure the contract for financing, constructing and operating the Chinchow-Amur Railway, Russian political acquiescence, at least, if not support, being assured either by permitting the Russo-Chinese Bank to handle Pauling's construction accounts or by giving that institution a share in the flotation.

II. The Manchurian Bank should be taken up as part of the general scheme, but would not necessarily be the next step which should be,—

III. The purchase of the Chinese Eastern Railway by the Chino-American British Company which shall operate the Chinchow-Amur Line. Prior to such purchase the American government should interchange with Russia notes similar to those exchanged with Japan on November 30th, 1908. Russia, in order to secure such a political entente, would be willing before selling the railway to withdraw the railway guards and recognize fully China's sovereignty

and administrative right within the so-called 'Railway Settlements' over which the Chinese Eastern Railway now claims jurisdiction.

IV. The withdrawal of the railway guards and the abandonment of the claim to administrative rights would force Japan in view of her obligations under the Treaty of Portsmouth and the Komura Agreement either to follow suit or to stand convicted of international bad faith.

"Considering her alliance with England the Russo-Japanese and Anglo-Russian ententes and the notes exchanged with us in November last, Japan's opposition to a Russo-American entente would hardly be a diplomatic probability. The possible extension of a participation which would satisfy Japanese *amour propre* and not produce Chinese distrust, timely reference to the contract which Mr. Harriman signed for the joint operation of the South Manchurian Railway and which was ignored but never cancelled by Japan and the judicious manipulation of the American and European attitude toward the war loan conversion and treaty revision which Japan now contemplates, should render impossible any overt act of hostility or any very serious intrigue which could in any way be attributed to Japan."

His letters and cables did not produce the result which he hoped. After Mr. Harriman's death there was no one connected with the Group in New York who saw the plan as clearly and as convincingly as Mr. Harriman and Willard Straight saw it and who was capable of devising means to carry it out. Above all there was no one who understood the indispensability of securing Russian cooperation or who, if they did understand it, was able to continue Mr. Harriman's negotiations with the Russian government.

Japanese hostility to the project was certain. Its friends might make headway against Japan but only in case they succeeded in obtaining cordial Russian cooperation. Russian willingness to sell the Chinese Eastern Railroad provided the promoters of the plan with a weapon which a capable diplomatic swordsman might have wielded as effectively as Willard anticipated. But Mr. Harriman's successors did nothing to cultivate the disposition which existed in Russia to favor the plan. They refused to act on Willard's suggestion and dispatch to Russia a representative who might be capable of securing Russian consent. "No one in New York," as Willard wrote in a memorandum on the subject, "knew precisely what Mr. Harriman had in mind. No one was capable of carrying through his scheme. The directing genius had gone."

But although no one in New York knew precisely what Mr. Harriman had in mind or was capable of carrying through his scheme, they were more alert if not more capable in Washington. I have narrated the decisive part played by the Department of State and President Taft in obtaining for American capital an equal share in the Hukuang Railways concession and I have indicated their desire to associate this increased American investment with the gradual emancipation of China from alien exploitation. They were now planning a further and more original diplomatic enterprise which consisted of nothing less than the neutralization of the whole Manchurian Railway system by general international agreement. It was, of course, derived from the Harriman plan and looked towards its transformation from a project which was fundamentally a matter of finance and transportation into a fundamentally political project. But unlike the Harriman plan, it was launched without any

careful estimate of the obstacles in its path and without any sufficient diplomatic preparation.

The transformation of the project into a predominantly political enterprise was unfortunate in one respect. It diminished the chance of obtaining the indispensable Russian support. Mr. Harriman had approached the Russian government through its Department of Finance, and this Department was at that time favorable to the idea of selling the Chinese Eastern Railway. M. Kokovtsoff was as good as his word. He took his journey to the Far East. He arranged and held a conference with Prince Ito at Harbin just previous to the assassination of that statesman. Prince Ito had been one of the Japanese political leaders who in 1905 had favored the sale of the South Manchurian Railway to Mr. Harriman. When the two men met they discussed among other subjects the possibility of an agreement between Russia and Japan for a less exclusive policy in Manchuria. After M. Kokovtsoff's return to Petersburg he advised the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway and he succeeded in carrying an influential group in the Russian government with him in support of the idea. But there was also a powerful party in opposition, headed by M. Isvolsky, the Chief of the Foreign Office. The ultimate triumph of either one party or the other depended largely upon a sufficiently adroit handling of the negotiation by American diplomacy.

"Assuming," says Mr. J. O. P. Bland in his "Recent Events and Present Policies in China," "that Prince Ito was prepared to maintain upon terms his original approval of Mr. Harriman's schemes and noting M. Kokovtsoff's favorable disposition, it is within the bounds of possibility that if the Japanese statesman had not met his death at Harbin

the course of history might have taken a turn very different from that which ensued." But in order to convert this possibility into anything like a probability, we would have to assume Mr. Harriman's survival as well as Prince Ito's. For, if Mr. Harriman had survived he would have vigorously carried on the negotiation which he had begun with the Russian Finance Minister along the lines indicated in Willard Straight's letter to Mr. Schiff. As it was, the American Group refused to dispatch to Petersburg a capable negotiator, and in the absence of such representation, there was small chance for the triumph of the pro-American and pro-Chinese party.

The State Department started its neutralization proposals with a diplomatic approach very different from that of Mr. Harriman. Instead of beginning with an attempt to secure Russian cooperation and so to divide Russia from Japan, it began with an attempt to secure British cooperation. Apparently it assumed that Mr. Harriman had already obtained the consent of Russia and Japan, or that in so far as those Powers raised any obstacles, it could best overcome them by assuring itself of British support. But Japanese opposition was certain and the most promising way to counteract it was to lean upon Russian rather than British support. British policy in the Far East was determined by the alliance with Japan. The Japanese government was either assured of British diplomatic support or safeguarded against British opposition. "The case of the Fakumen Railway," says Mr. J. O. P. Bland, "had clearly proved that Downing Street was not prepared to antagonize Japan either for the extension of British interests in Manchuria or for the protection of China's repeatedly guaranteed integrity." Great Britain's fear of Germany was mak-

ing her the accomplice of Japanese imperialism in the Far East just as it was making her the accomplice of Russian imperialism in Persia and French imperialism in North Africa.

It was on November 6th, 1909, that the State Department in a memorandum presented by Ambassador Reid to the Foreign Office submitted its proposal to the British government. The memorandum began by calling the attention of the Foreign Office to the agreement about the Chinchow-Tsitsihar-Aigun Railroad, the association of British with American interests in the signing of the agreement with China and the need of cooperative diplomatic support for the project on the part of both governments. It declared the willingness of the American government to admit the representatives of other nations into a share in this agreement, but proposed instead the consideration of a more comprehensive project. "It would like to bring the Manchurian highways, the railroads, under an economic, scientific and impartial administration by some plan vesting in China the ownership of the railroads through funds furnished for that purpose by the interested powers willing to participate." It "has some reason to hope that such a plan might meet favorable consideration on the part of Russia." But "if this suggestion be not found feasible in its entirety" the government of the United States hoped to reach an approximately similar result through diplomatic support by Great Britain and the United States of the Chinchow-Aigun railroad and of subsequent extension or of proposed concessions. "The consummation of some such plan would avoid the irritations likely to be engendered by the uncontrolled direct negotiations of bankers with the Chinese government and would create such a community of substan-

tial interest in China as would facilitate a cooperative handling of the problems of fiscal and monetary reform."

On November 25th Sir Edward Grey returned an extremely guarded reply to this communication. He approved of the "general principle" which underlay the neutralization proposals but pleaded for a postponement of its consideration. As to the request, in the event of the failure of the larger plan, for diplomatic cooperation between Great Britain and the United States in support of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad and its future extension, Sir Edward Grey treated this overture towards a joint Anglo-American diplomatic policy with scant courtesy. "I have the honor to suggest," he says, "for your Excellency's consideration that as preliminary steps towards attaining this desirable end, the two governments should unite in endeavoring to persuade the Chinese government to admit the Japanese to participation in the Chinchow-Aigun line as being the parties most interested." In other words, Anglo-American cooperation in the Far East was not considered desirable to His Majesty's government provided it involved any danger of a difference of opinion with Japan.

A prudent diplomat would have appraised this answer as a plain warning against pressing the plan of neutralization or the alternative proposal until the American government was assured of a more favorable reception. Sir Edward Grey's approval of the general principle was more than counterbalanced by his reluctance to have the proposal pushed and by his far from cordial retort to the extremely friendly overtures of the American government. But the American State Department interpreted the reply as on the whole encouraging and it proceeded to launch its plan without any additional diplomatic preparation and with

the expectation of British support. On December 14th it communicated to the Foreign Office its intention of proceeding with the negotiations. "The representatives of the United States at Peking, Tokyo, St. Petersburg, Paris and Berlin will accordingly be instructed forthwith in the above sense and the government is now prepared as a preliminary step to join with the government of Great Britain in urging China to consent to participation in the Chinchow-Aigun line by Japan and other Powers." It alleges as a sufficient reason that the proposed Chinchow-Aigun Railroad has become a matter of public comment in Japan and elsewhere and that "this publicity and uninformed discussion will tend greatly to prejudice, if it does not entirely defeat, the successful culmination of the policy now agreed on in principle between the governments of the United States and Great Britain." The communication ends by declaring "that our government will welcome the cooperation" of the British government in securing favorable consideration of the project.

Head of a Chinese boy

The plan was submitted to China, Germany, France, Russia and Japan a few days later, and on January 6th, 1910, the State Department gave to the American press a long statement explaining the project and winding up with an extremely optimistic account of its prospects. After tell-

ing of the "approval in principle by Great Britain" it goes on to say: "There are reasons to believe that such a plan might also meet with favorable consideration on the part of Russia. Germany and China cordially approve the American suggestion and certain press reports from Japan indicate that the project may likewise be received with favor by that country." These anticipations were never fulfilled. The project, even if a Bismarck had been in charge of it, was too much of an innovation and compromised too many aggressive interests not to be extremely hazardous, but as it was actually handled it never had a chance of success. It resulted in a complete and humiliating failure.

Two days after the issue of the public statement, the disillusionment of the American State Department began. On January 8th, Ambassador O'Brien in Tokyo cabled that he has "learned indirectly from the Prime Minister that Japan will decline the suggestion of December 18th." On January 21st Count Komura transmitted to Ambassador O'Brien a long exposition of Japan's reasons for declining. She objected to it because it "contemplates a very important departure from the terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth," because it proposes to set up in Manchuria "an exceptional system not required in other parts of China," and because Japanese subjects and enterprises in Manchuria require and are entitled to special protection. The answer was, of course, to have been expected. Under the standards of international behavior which all the Powers except the United States had observed in China, it was unreasonable to ask Japan to surrender valuable privileges without a *quid pro quo* or without preparing for the use, if necessary, of some form of compulsion. The prior

agreement which Mr. Harriman wished to reach with Russia about the Chinese Eastern Railway was based upon the expectation of opposition on the part of Japan and was shrewdly conceived for the purpose of supplying him in that event with a powerful offensive weapon.

The State Department had failed to provide itself with such a weapon. It was Japan rather than the United States which reached the understanding with Russia. On January 20th, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs returned an answer to the American suggestion as definite as that of Japan and less polite. It declared that "nothing appears at the present time to threaten either the (Chinese) sovereignty or the open-door policy in Manchuria." The establishment of an international control of the Manchurian railroads "would seriously injure Russian interests," and so on. The acerbity of the reply was in part the result of a maladroit submission of the American proposal to the Russian Department of Foreign Affairs, but the clumsiness of method does not affect the main issue. Both Russia and Japan professed an undying attachment to the principles which the American government was trying to assert in its ill-advised proposal, but they declared with peremptory finality that the proposal itself was offensive to them and would not be accepted except under compulsion. In the face of this opposition the approval by the British and the German governments of the principle underlying the proposal of neutralization was merely a bit of perfunctory amiability. It meant nothing in the way of diplomatic support. The American government had placed a false estimate upon the guarded approval by the British government of the principle of neutralization and had exaggerated its disposition to cooperate with the disinterested policy of

the United States as contrasted with the imperialistic policy of Japan.

The alternative proposal in relation to the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad did not fare any better than the plan of neutralization. The Chinese government had in January ratified the agreement of the Viceroy of Manchuria with Pauling and Company and with the American Group, and in doing so it had acted well within its rights. The proposed railroad opened up a new and undeveloped region. Frank opposition to it on the part of Japan would have been a clear violation of her promise in the Treaty of Portsmouth not to interfere with Chinese development. In view, however, of her probable covert opposition, it was even more necessary to obtain Russian support for this alternative proposal than it was for the plan of neutralization. For the Chinchow-Aigun road was planned to cross the Trans-Siberian at Tsitsihar and to penetrate to the Russian frontier on the Amur. Not only was Russian consent and co-operation indispensable, but the winning of that consent by negotiation was not as intrinsically difficult and doubtful an enterprise as the winning of her consent to the plan of neutralization. But again the State Department had taken no precautions in advance to conciliate Russia. On the contrary it had alienated the Russian government by neglecting the easy and inexpensive art of courtship. In this case, also, the British support upon which the American government counted was conspicuous by its absence.

After Sir Edward Grey's note on November 24th, the American government had quickly acted on his advice with respect to Japan. It instructed Mr. Fletcher to inform the Chinese government that it considered Japanese participation in the enterprise desirable. There the matter rested

until on January 21st the Wai-Wu-Pu issued the Imperial Rescript ratifying the preliminary contract of October. Thereupon both Russia and Japan formally advised the Chinese government that it must not conclude detailed arrangements for financing and building the railroad without consulting them, Japan stating at the same time that she desired to participate in the enterprise. The Japanese did not, however, actively oppose it. They allowed Russia to do the opposing for them. On February 24th the Russian Embassy in Washington informed the State Department that the proposed railroad "would be exceedingly injurious both to the strategic and to the economic interests of Russia" and claimed that China in signing the contract had broken a promise made to Russia in 1899. It proposed as an alternative to the Chinchow-Aigun route a line from a point much further west on the Trans-Siberian Railroad across Mongolia via Urga to Peking. This declared enmity on the part of Russia looked serious, but the American State Department refused to consider it fatal. In its reply it questioned the validity of the alleged promise, insisted that the American government was acting within its legal rights in giving diplomatic support to the agreement of the American group with China, but offered to meet any Russian objections to the route of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad and to take up subsequently the matter of building a line from Peking via Urga to Kiatchka.

There was probably no one, even in the State Department, who followed these negotiations with such intense interest as did Willard Straight. They formed the most startling innovation which had taken place in American diplomacy since the Spanish-American war and he, a young man of thirty, could fairly claim to have originated the

idea and to have profoundly influenced its specific expression. Other people, including Mr. Harriman, Huntington Wilson, Secretary Knox and President Taft, had each in his own way contributed essentially to the result; but the initial energy and most of the early spade work were Straight's. He had conceived a more realistic method of testing the vitality of the traditional American policy of the "open door." For years the State Department had extorted on every possible occasion from the interested governments apparently unequivocal statements in favor of equal rights for all nations in China. In the meantime these same governments, but particularly Russia and Japan, had consistently claimed special economic and legal privileges and successfully bullied the Chinese government into yielding. Their policy, and to a smaller extent that of the other nations in China, was a combination of hypocrisy and piracy which it was difficult to resist and expose as long as the only method of resistance and counter-assertion consisted in writing diplomatic notes. The way to find out how far the "open door" existed in China was to try and enter it.

The agreement to finance the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad which Straight had obtained from the Chinese government furnished a yard stick with which to measure the sincerity of the Russian and the Japanese professions in favor of the "open door" and the independence of China. The American government gave strong and unequivocal diplomatic support to the concession not only in the expectation of promoting American interests in China but also of discovering how far Japan and Russia, whose statesmen considered Manchuria as their special sphere of influence, would allow other nations to obtain in that province economic opportunities of any scope and value. In associating

with this diplomatic support of the proposed new Manchurian Railway the more far-reaching and comprehensive plan to neutralize the whole Manchurian Railway system, the State Department wished, if possible, to remove the greatest existing threat to the independence of China, while at the same time proving the disinterested nature of American political and business intervention. It was in its conception a thoroughly statesmanlike policy, which aimed at accomplishing an essentially and desirably American national purpose by appropriate and promising means.

Willard Straight fully approved of associating the diplomatic promotion of the Chinchow-Aigun line with that of the neutralization of the whole Manchurian Railway system. He was himself the first to suggest the plan of neutralization. The occasion which had provoked the suggestion was the intimation which reached Mr. Jacob H. Schiff in November 1908, that Russia might be willing to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway. At that time he wrote a memorandum for Mr. Schiff in which he outlined the idea. He referred to this memorandum when he entered the following note in his diary of January 10th, 1910. "I must say I consume a certain amount of satisfaction in this project (the plan of neutralization), for it's mine, after all's said and done, and was started when I lunched with Mr. Schiff one day at the Lawyers' Club in New York." But just as the project originated in Straight's mind as a consequence of the Russian overture, so its chance of success had in his mind always depended upon American ability to secure Russian consent and cooperation. That was why he tried so hard after Mr. Harriman's death to have the Group represented in St. Petersburg and that was why he occupied himself in Peking with overcoming Russian opposition. A

few quotations from his correspondence will indicate what part he was playing in the negotiations and the estimate which he placed on the forces which were making either for or against success.

As early as November 10th, 1909, in a letter to J. P. Morgan and Company he foreshadowed the opposition which Russia was threatening against the American plan: "M. Korostovetz, the Russian minister, returned to Peking on November 1st. Through various channels he intimated to Mr. Fletcher and myself that unless the Group were prepared to come to some understanding he feared that M. Kokovtseff, the Minister of Finance, would recommend that his government make a pact with Japan." Mr. Fletcher answered this combination of a hint with a threat in the grand manner which American diplomacy knows so well how to assume. "The American government," he said was "committed to certain principles" which "it would continue to uphold" "no matter whether the opposition came from Russia and Japan acting individually or together." Straight himself was eager to negotiate with the Russians and had cabled to New York for permission to go ahead, but when the permission came he decided not to use it until after the Chinese had issued the edict of ratification. Then unexpected obstacles delayed the publication of the edict and no negotiations were started. Whoever was responsible, it was a crucial mistake. Between November 1st and January 1st Russia and Japan reached an agreement. The American government continued to uphold its principles in spite of the opposition of Japan and Russia, and Japan and Russia tightened their grip on Manchuria in spite of their defiance of the American principles.

After ratification came on January 21st, Straight started

his negotiations without knowing that it was already too late. On January 25th he had a long talk with Korostovetz who suggested that the Group or the American government approach the Russian government to learn what could be done to satisfy Russian objections [to the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad]. Willard answered by refusing to recognize Russia's special interest in the matter, but offering to Russia participation in the benefits of the agreement. A few days later he records in his diary: "Stormy interview with Korostovetz in which he went so far as to suggest that the Chinchow-Aigun road might be divided in sections, Russia to have the northern end. I told him that would be impossible, nor would we consent to Russian or Japanese engineers. He also at great length told me how the 'open door' drool had been inserted in the Portsmouth Treaty to please the United States, and then nullified by the confirmation of the 1896 Railroad Agreement, the French text of which was on the table. He said we should have known about this. He also made interesting admissions about the Harbin agreement of May 10th, five articles affirming China's sovereignty and the sixth stating that the railroad should be administered from St. Petersburg. Altogether a most barefaced admission of trickery and chicanery."

Both the American Group and the American government received, consequently, abundant warning as to what the Russian policy towards the Chinchow-Aigun line was likely to be. The Russian communication of February 24th should not have come as a surprise. Nevertheless they were not prepared and felt no assurance as to their best course of action under the circumstances. The State Department had expected the neutralization plan either to win acceptance by Russia and Japan as a clear application of the accepted

principle of the "open door" or in the event of failure to clear the air by exposing the mixture of piracy with hypocrisy in their behavior. That is, it expected the proposal to succeed, or if it failed, to divide either Japan from Russia or from Great Britain or from both. The calculation miscarried in every respect. At the end of it all the American government had isolated itself rather than Japan. Its diplomacy had driven Russia into the arms of Japan and it had revealed France and Great Britain as Japan's willing accomplices. The plan of railroad neutralization was dead. The Chinchow-Aigun concession did not ostensibly die with it, but the remaining vitality had come to depend on the willingness and the ability of the American Group and government to push imperturbably ahead in spite of Russian and Japanese opposition and the lack of British support.

This lack of British support was the keenest disappointment and the severest disillusionment which the American negotiators suffered in the whole matter. To Willard in particular on account of his warm friendship with Englishmen and his personal liking for them, it came as a great shock. He wrote to J. O. P. Bland on January 10th, "Incidentally I don't see much use in playing very hard with you Britishers. You're all right as individuals, but my Lord! what a government you've got." On March 3rd in a letter to Assistant Secretary Wilson, he says: "The greatest surprise to me has been the cold-footed trimming policy exhibited by the English. They have been so busy trying to explain to Japan and Russia that they had no desire to interfere with the usurpation of those Powers in Manchuria that they have further injured their already waning prestige in China." And three weeks later writing

to Mr. Davison, he adds: "The saddest part of it all is that if Great Britain had played the game, the whole trouble could have been avoided."

The State Department in its reply to the Russian communication of February 24th had maintained a brave front and practically declared its intention of going ahead in spite of Russian opposition. But in order to go ahead it needed an agreement in detail with the Chinese government about the Chinchow-Aigun road. The Edict of January 21st had ratified the preliminary agreement subject to reservations. If any further action was to be taken on the basis of the agreement, the parties to it must confirm it in a specific contract. As such a contract constituted an obligation of the American Group more than that of the government, Willard Straight as the Group's agent began negotiations for a final agreement about the middle of March. At first these negotiations went fairly well and Willard was hopeful of ultimate success. But by the middle of April the Chinese representatives had shown so unmistakable a reluctance to close that he suspected they were not negotiating in good faith. He decided on an ultimatum. He announced his intention of leaving Peking on April 28th, no matter whether the agreement was signed or not. The agreement was not signed and, good as his word, he started from Peking for Europe on April 28th.

He explained his reasons for these tactics in a letter dated April 25th to Mr. Davison. "I have believed that if the Chinese were in earnest they could be forced to close by my threat to leave China on a certain date. I did not put it baldly that I would go if they didn't close, but said I would go anyway. If things were settled I could plead their case in St. Petersburg. If things were not settled I would

be obliged to report to New York that they were not serious in their expressed desire for the railway, but were merely trying to make political capital out of the whole affair. I became convinced, moreover, that if they did close there was nothing to be accomplished here, that St. Petersburg was the place to strike, that if they didn't settle with me they could do so with ffrench or Menocal equally well. We had reached an agreement regarding the loan contract, the construction contract being the great difficulty. My continued presence here would be no good while my departure might." There were many reasons for his departure, some of them personal and some of them connected with his work, but the major reason was his conviction that St. Petersburg rather than Peking was the place in which negotiation would decide the immediate future of the Chinchow-Aigun Railway. He had gradually shed his illusions and was coming to regard the Russian opposition as practically fatal. China would not dare to go ahead in spite of Russian opposition and without British support. He wrote to Mr. Schiff on April 24th: "China will do nothing about the Chinchow-Aigun Railway until we attempt at least to remove the Russian objection."

When he left Peking he had expected to linger in St. Petersburg and see what he could do with the Russian government. Instead, he went on through, reaching Berlin on Sunday, May 5th, 1910, during the festivities with which the German Emperor was entertaining Theodore Roosevelt. He then accompanied Mr. Roosevelt to London, stayed there a day or two, consumed another two days in an excursion to Milan and on May 22nd reached Paris where he met Mr. Davison. Two days later the Hukuang Agreement, in so far as it related to a division of the concession among the

Groups, was actually signed. On May 28th, he started on the Lusitania for New York where he landed on June 3rd. He remained just five days in his native country, of which one was spent in Oswego, two in Washington and the rest in New York. On June 14th he was back in London and by June 20th in St. Petersburg, where he stayed until the 25th, engaged in a series of interviews with the Russian Premier, Foreign Secretary, Finance Minister, War Minister and others. In these interviews he learned to his own satisfaction and with absolute finality that the Russian government would never willingly consent to the building of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad.

His two more important conversations were those with M. Kokovtseff and M. Isvolsky. In his report to J. P. Morgan and Company he summarized them as follows: "On June 22nd I called upon M. Kokovtseff. His attitude was such that it seemed unwise to suggest either to him or to his colleagues the possibility that the United States and Russia could, if Russia withdrew her objection to the Chinchow-Aigun Railway, come to a general understanding regarding the Far East. M. Kokovtseff impressed me as an able bureaucrat, honest, frank, but not far-sighted. . . . He was thoroughly familiar with Manchurian conditions and seemed honestly convinced that the Chinchow-Aigun Railway would be injurious to Russia on economic grounds. He was most cordial and friendly throughout." Very different was his experience with the Foreign Secretary. "M. Isvolsky whom I saw on the 23rd was on the contrary disagreeable and petulant. He evidently endeavored to irritate me. His attitude seemed anti-American, although he expressed a desire for American cooperation and friendship. His offer was accompanied by a virtual threat as to

what would happen to China should the United States continue to support her 'anti-Russian attitude.' I am under the impression that most of his conversation was bluff."

His interviews with the Prime Minister and the Minister of War developed nothing of interest except that the latter warmly repudiated the idea that the building of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad would threaten Russian military interests in the Far East. But his short conversation with M. Witte throws enough light on the cleavage of opinion in Russia about the Far Eastern policy of the government to make it worth quoting in full.

"Count Witte: What have they said to you?

Straight: I set forth M. Kokovtseff's objections to the Road, economic and strategic.

W: They talk of economics but it's politics they have in the back of their heads. Have you got your contracts? Can you go ahead?

S: I said we had, qualifying it as much as I could before he interrupted me.

W: Then what are you here for?

S: To ascertain the Russian point of view, to remove objections if possible, to assure the Russian government we would welcome Russian participation. To discuss, not to negotiate nor to ask permission to proceed.

W: Russia has no money. She cannot participate. You go ahead and build your railway. They cannot stop you and won't try. Confront them with a fact. Then you can come here and talk if you like. You can spend your time to better advantage in London than in St. Petersburg."

What Willard learned in St. Petersburg confirmed his

previous impression that the Group and the government between them had botched hopelessly the essential job of dividing Russia from Japan. In the beginning skillful diplomacy might have brought about the separation by proving to the Russians how much more they had to gain from cooperating with the United States than from allying themselves with Japan. American capital would have developed and rendered profitable what remained of their investment in Manchuria, whereas an agreement with Japan would starve Russian Manchuria and was, because of Japan's comparatively greater interests, much more advantageous to Japan than to Russia. There was a powerful anti-Japanese group in the government which might well have come into control, provided it could have counted on the needed kind and amount of American support. But the support was never tendered in the right way or at the right time or in sufficient volume. That was why Russia joined with Japan both in opposing the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad and in rejecting the larger plan of general neutralization. In a letter written to Mr. Davison after his return from St. Petersburg he says: "It seems to me that the neutralization proposition was badly bungled. Had it been handled with a little more circumspection, had the scouting been done by the Group and the mass plays by the State Department, we should have been able to capture the Russians and have avoided much of our present trouble. Isvolsky would have tried to stop us, but a little more consideration for Russian feelings would have spiked his guns."

We may agree with Willard Straight that the way in which the negotiation was handled sufficiently accounts for its failure without inferring that a more skillful diplomacy would have achieved complete success. I doubt whether the

American Group could have negotiated a tolerable bargain with Russia at that time. The scarcely veiled contempt with which Count Witte referred to the people who then ruled Russia was fully justified. Inasmuch as Japanese opposition had permanently thwarted Russian imperialist designs on China, Russia did, no doubt, possess a clear interest in reversing her former policy and in aiding the United States to strengthen the Chinese resistance to Japanese aggression. An abler American diplomacy might have successfully cultivated this Russian interest in the welfare of China or rather this lack of Russian interest in exploiting the Chinese. Yet I cannot entirely regret that American diplomacy failed to undertake the job. The Russian government would have insisted on driving what would have been a hard bargain for honest men. The late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain once pointed out, having the Russian Imperial government in mind, that he who sups with the devil must fish with a long spoon. How could American diplomacy fish in the same pot with the Russian government of that time without either wielding too long a spoon or going hungry and dry?

In the letter to J. P. Morgan and Company from which I have already quoted, Willard Straight enters into a careful analysis of the reasons which moved Russians like M. Isvolsky to prefer an understanding with Japan to an understanding with the United States. Their dominant motive was fear. They wished to preserve intact the meagre remnants of what was to have been the Manchurian province of the Russian Empire. The Treaty of Portsmouth rendered this remnant peculiarly exposed to Japanese attack and it had become practically indefensible. The sense of its indefensibility against a hostile Japan had prompted the

original overtures for the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway, but when America transformed this proposed bargain into a plan to neutralize all the Manchurian Railways in defiance of Japanese opposition, Russian statesmen might well hesitate to accept the larger plan. They were not interested in the welfare of China which formed the chief motive of the Knox policy; and Russian industry was so backward that it had something to lose and nothing to gain from the veritable opening of the economic door into China. But if Russia had no sufficient interest in risking opposition to the Japanese, the wise alternative from the point of view of a continental statesman was to reach an understanding with them. Although the Japanese might reap most of the positive advantages of such an understanding, the Russian government would at least save its face. The understanding would guarantee the remaining Russian interest in Manchuria against immediate attack.

The Chinchow-Aigun Railway involved a group of considerations different from those which moved the Russian government to join Japan in rejecting the plan of neutralization. But if the rejection of the larger proposal naturally resulted in an express understanding by Russia with Japan, it brought in its train Russian opposition to the proposed new railway. For an American-owned line from the Amur to the head of the Gulf of Pechili would render China more independent of Japan and would impair the privileged position of that Power in Manchuria. Japan was not willing to have it constructed, but neither had she any sufficient pretext openly to oppose it. Russia had, however, in the Chinese Eastern Railway a pretext for opposition which in the interest of an understanding with Japan she could push to the limit. She could not prohibit its construction. The

United States was legally entitled to go ahead in spite of Russian hostility. But if the hostility was sufficiently emphatic China might not dare to let the American Group proceed. The plan of the Russian government was consequently to make its opposition most explicit and most emphatic.

This it did a few days after Willard Straight returned to London from his abortive expedition to St. Petersburg. On July 4th, 1910, a date chosen no doubt for the purpose of pointedly calling American attention to the act, Russia and Japan signed a convention which converted the belligerents of 1905 into intimate and confidential friends. The substance of the convention was contained in the provisions of the Third Article which served notice to all concerned that if anything should happen to threaten the *status quo* in Manchuria the two high contracting parties would "enter into communication with each other with a view to an understanding as to the measures they may think it necessary to take for the maintenance of the *status quo*." This precious script was, of course, a sixteen-inch gun aimed accurately and obviously at defenceless China. Japan and Russia had both revealed with glaring lucidity what they meant by the *status quo* in Manchuria. They meant the preservation intact of existing concessions and privileges, which were fatal to the independence of China, which secured to Japan a license to exploit the natural resources of Manchuria and which prevented the citizens of other states from enjoying any equality of economic opportunity in that province. After the revelation in the winter of 1909-1910 of the real meaning of the *status quo*, the previous action of the Roosevelt administration, in assuring Japan of the intention of the American government not to disturb it, stood

out as a clear betrayal of China and of American interests in China.

Neither Willard Straight nor his associates in the State Department and in the American Group drew at the time the correct conclusion from the Russo-Japanese Entente of July 4th, 1910. They did not infer that the Russians had buried the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad in the populous diplomatic graveyard side by side with the plan of neutralization. Yet such was the case. The Chinese government did not dare to disregard this emphatic expression of hostility to the new railroad on the part of the only two Powers which were in a position to place large bodies of troops at short notice in Manchuria. If she was to protect herself against such a threat, she would need the assurance of effective military support both from Great Britain and the United States and it was obvious she could not get it. In spite of the discrepancy between the Russo-Japanese agreement and the clause of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in reference to the "open door," the British government had not raised any question in reference to Japanese policy and it had failed to support the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad. On the other hand the United States was unprepared both physically and morally to back up the Chinese policy of the Taft administration with force or the threat of force. The American nation would not have gone to the rescue of China in case that government, as the result of its agreement with the American Group, had found itself the victim of a bullying attitude on the part of its powerful neighbors.

The aggressive diplomacy of the Taft administration in China failed because its authors did not contrive any method adequate to realize their statesmanlike ends. The American government aimed at a result which injured a

vital Japanese interest and which was certain to incur Japanese hostility. It needed, consequently, either to secure support for its plan which the Japanese would not dare to resist, or failing such support, to be prepared, if necessary, itself to overcome Japanese resistance. It did neither. It alienated instead of conciliated Russia, expecting in the meantime to obtain support from Great Britain, and then felt aggrieved because Great Britain would not come to its assistance and persuade or compel Japan and Russia, one her ally and the other her associate in international politics, to yield. Neither did it understand until after it had failed to secure British assistance how helpless it was when thrown on its own resources. As soon as Japan and Russia definitely said "No," it was impotent to go ahead even with a project like the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad which did not legally or equitably need Russian and Japanese consent. The American nation would not have gone to war in order to sustain the right of the Chinese to build railroads in Manchuria with American capital. Even if it would have fought to back up such a policy, it did not have the military and naval power to prevent Japan and Russia from occupying and retaining all the Chinese territory whose inviolacy the Taft administration proposed to protect.

When the plan failed it was natural to feel aggrieved at the lack of British support. But it was scarcely reasonable to expect British statesmen to pay the high price which vigorous diplomatic support of the American proposal would have cost them. They were obliged to consider the reverberation of American diplomacy in China upon the delicate balance of power in Europe. Considering the awful dangers which then threatened the peace of the world, the British Foreign Office could not afford to imperil the good-

will of Japan and Russia for the sake of cooperating in China with a country like the United States, which was neither ready nor willing to support British diplomacy in any of its Asiatic, African or European policies. The American State Department should have realized how different the situation of Great Britain was from that of the United States. It should not have expected British diplomatic support at the price of offending Japan and Russia unless it was prepared to compensate Great Britain for the sacrifice.

Both the methods and the purposes of the diplomacy of the Taft administration in China assumed the existence of an unreal world of international politics. It assumed a world in which principles, such as that of the "open door," rather than the conflict of irresponsible and selfish forces, constituted the effective realities. It assumed that the American government, which had induced the other Powers verbally to accept the principle of the "open door" in China, could also induce them to act upon it, without taking into account the reaction of what they did upon the balance of international forces in Europe and elsewhere throughout the world. It assumed that a Power which accepted the principle of the "open door" would incur an expensive penalty if it could be publicly convicted of refusing to live up to its professions. All these assumptions were false. European statesmen, in framing the policy of their governments in China, always attached prime importance to the reaction of that policy upon the balance of power in Europe; and the balance of power in Europe resulted from the rivalry of the contending forces of national aggression. France and Great Britain might have worked disinterestedly on behalf of the "open door" in China, but neither of

them could afford to do so at the price of injuring their entente with Russia. Needing Russia as the Western Powers did in Europe in order to counterbalance the Central Empires, they were obliged to pay for her cooperation in Europe by becoming her accomplices in Persia and China. It was fantastic for the State Department to expect any cooperation by Great Britain in China which was purchased at the price of the entente between Great Britain and Russia in Europe.

Japan like the United States was interested in China rather than in Europe, but she differed from the United States in that her policy in the Far East was born of the application to that region of the aims and methods which determined the policy in Europe of the European states. She was aiming to become the dominant power in Eastern Asia and the Pacific. She had already pushed Russia partly out of her way and she had disarmed British opposition by guaranteeing British possessions in that region and so enabling the Empire to concentrate its naval strength in and about Europe. She was very useful to the British Empire, so useful that as long as she concealed the brutal imperialism of her continental Asiatic policy behind the usual pretenses and formulas, she could count on British connivance. The United States was the only remaining nation which might possess at once the interest, the power and the disposition to prevent her from building up a vast empire under her sovereignty on the Asiatic continent. Under the direction of John Hay the American government had insisted on applying to China the principle of the "open door," but hitherto like Great Britain it had contented itself with affirming the rule without inquiring too closely into its application. The policy of the Taft administration con-

stituted the first American attempt to practise it. In the resulting diplomatic duel Japanese *real politik* won a complete triumph over the American attempt to combat interest and power with principle. Japanese statesmen knew far better than did American statesmen the difference between realities and illusions in the world of international politics.

The superficial lesson of the defeat was the necessary imitation of Japan by America. If the American nation wished to check Japan and save China, it must prepare itself to exert as much force in China as Japan could and at the same time pay any price which might be necessary to persuade Great Britain to substitute an American for a Japanese alliance. But the superficial lesson was not the true lesson. In so far as it was sincerely democratic the American nation was and must remain unprepared to participate in the politics of alliances and counter-balances of power. The veto which the Senate ultimately exercises upon foreign policies initiated by the Executive was alone sufficient to disqualify the United States to compete with Japan for preponderance of power in the Far East. In such a competition the superior celerity, flexibility, single-mindedness and furtiveness of Japanese policy would give Japan a permanent and decisive advantage. The only chance of American success depends upon the transformation for the better of the realities of international politics, upon the substitution of a more orderly and principled society of nations for the kind of society which prevailed in 1910. In this sense the Chinese policy of the Taft administration had a remote if not an immediate justification. Baffled though it was, it sought and tended, prematurely but still justifiably, to create in the Far East the kind of society of nations whose existence it erroneously assumed.

It was a clear foreshadowing of the policy which has recently been followed under more favorable conditions and with more circumspection and success by another Republican administration.

American policy in China in so far as it sincerely sought to preserve the political independence and territorial integrity of that country must have obtained its final sanction from general consent. The attempt to vindicate it by the creation and concentration of an American military and naval force, commensurate with that which Japan had created as the instrument of her policy of imperialist expansion, would have involved a suicidal contradiction. For an army and navy large enough to enable the United States successfully to fight Japan in China would have called for a colossal expense; and no people would put up with such an expense in the interest of a policy the benefits of which they proposed to share with the rest of the world. If America imitated the method of Japan, she must in the end have imitated also the policy of Japan. A principle such as that of the "open door" derives its vitality not from the power of one nation but from the consent of all. It may be optimistic to declare that such consent has recently been obtained. Japan still insists on her privileged position in Manchuria. But the limitation of armaments in the Pacific and the partial concert recently established in that region have impaired the vitality of the gravest obstacle to the future success of the traditional American policy in China.

The proposal to neutralize the Manchurian Railways implied the formation of a Far Eastern concert for the specific purpose of jointly guaranteeing and promoting equality of economic opportunity in Manchuria. The franchises of the South Manchurian and Chinese Eastern Railroads were

incompatible with the exercise of such equal rights by Americans or Englishmen, and their return to the Chinese government, as the ward of all the nations which sought to trade in Manchuria, formed an absolute condition both of the future independence of China and of the economic development of Manchuria. The plan failed. Both Russia and Japan insisted on preserving their privileged status in Manchuria and possessed the will and the power to override and ignore the discontent of China and the United States. But the idea which is embodied did not die with the proposal. It was renewed at a later date in another form. Although defeated in its broader application the method of international cooperation was, as we shall see in the next chapter, almost immediately vindicated in a closely connected region as a more practical method than that of aggressive and unscrupulous competition for accelerating the economic development of China by the investment of foreign capital.

CHAPTER X

THE CONCERT OF BANKING GROUPS IN CHINA

AFTER his reconnoitring expedition to St. Petersburg and its failure Willard Straight marked time in Europe until the end of July when he received orders to return to New York. His presence was wanted at the headquarters of the Group. Its leading members were divided by differences of opinion as to the conduct and future of their enterprise which were sufficiently lively and important to compromise its very existence. When Willard reached New York at the end of the first week in August, he anticipated a quick and final ending of his work in China and was wondering what he would do next.

There were excellent reasons for the differences of opinion among the members of the Group. As men who were accustomed to transact business under American conditions they did not like the complicated intrigues, the inveterate haggling over petty details, the prolonged and costly uncertainties and the futile competition for prestige which formed the necessary method, and, as they feared, the substance of "dollar diplomacy" in China. Mr. Harriman had shown himself a true prophet when he had written to Mr. Davison, "I fear you will be disappointed in the outcome of Chinese matters. It is going to need patience and not too much must be expected and not too soon." Many members of the Group were not inclined to be patient. They preferred clean-cut transactions which did not necessitate long delays and ambiguous commitments and whose consum-

mation was not dependent on the approval of many conflicting interests and many treacherous people. They did not like to mix so much politics with their business. Since the formation of the Group they had spent a great deal of money on expenses without having secured any contract save their arrangement with the other Groups for the financing of the Hukuang Railways. They were disheartened by their failure to put through the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad in which their interest would have been dominant, and they were terrified by the possible responsibility for international conflicts which the diplomacy of the administration imposed in part on them. It did not look like good business to them. Some of them wanted to withdraw and all were in doubt.

Above all they were dissatisfied with the State Department, its behavior and their relation to it. According to the subsequent critics of "dollar diplomacy" the connection was one which degraded the American government into the accomplice of private banking interests. The facts of the matter were precisely the reverse. It was the State Department which was trying to use a group of American bankers as the accomplice of the policy of the American government in China. The majority of these bankers had gone into the Group not because they were seeking Chinese investments but in order to oblige the administration. They naturally were aggrieved when, owing to the headstrong, blundering and dangerous diplomacy of the State Department, the plans on which they had spent a good deal of money came to nothing.

The State Department had placed the Group in an embarassing and ticklish position, the difficulties and hazards of which its members felt most keenly. The actual effect

of the attempt to vindicate the "open door" in China was to create an entente between Japan and Russia which united them in resistance to any active assertion of the principle in Manchuria. Russia had served notice of its intention to oppose in every practical way the building of the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad. The State Department had not invented any answer to this notice except its original defiance. It proposed to vindicate American principles in spite of all opposition. But if, as the result of such an assertion of the American right to accept contracts from China to build railroads in Manchuria, the United States became involved in war or in the threat of war with Japan and Russia, how would the American people regard the quarrel? Would not the newspapers accuse the Group of drawing the country into a possibly bloody conflict with other countries for the benefit of their own pockets? And in spite of the falsity of this attack could they expect to put up a plausible and effective defense against it?

In so far as the Group was used by the administration as the instrument of an isolated and aggressive American policy in China, which involved the danger of collision with other nations, the administration was placing the Group in an impossible position. Countries like France and Germany might drift to the verge of war over the conflicting interests of would-be concessionaires in Morocco, but the American people would desert any administration which placed them in the position of fighting in order to back up the foreign enterprises of American capital. Even though the policy of the administration was framed in the interest of China as well as of America and was devised to vindicate the principle of equal rights for all nations in undeveloped countries, American public opinion would remain hos-

tile and unconvinced. It would see only the purple line between the State Department with its dangerously belligerent diplomacy and Wall Street. Considerations of the kind made all the bankers hesitate and many of them prefer unceremoniously to abandon all connection with "dollar diplomacy."

After Willard's arrival in New York some weeks elapsed before the chief of the Group could assemble its several members in one room. It was not until September 1st that the conference took place. Of the four participating banks the First National and the National City pressed for withdrawal, while Kuhn, Loeb and Company and J. P. Morgan and Company wished to continue. After a prolonged discussion Mr. Davison and Mr. Schiff reënforced by Mr. J. P. Morgan himself persuaded their reluctant associates not to retire. They decided to continue the Peking office, to sit tight on their contracts and so far as possible to steer clear of the diplomatic *impasse* which the headstrong policy of the State Department had created. Willard Straight attached the credit for the affirmative decision to Mr. Davison.

But when they decided not to retire they decided also to free themselves from the dangerous and ambiguous responsibilities which might be imposed upon them by the former policy of the administration. They did not want it said with even the remotest degree of plausibility that the promotion of their interests as investment bankers was pushing the American nation into war with any European or Asiatic country. In order to write off this formidable item on the wrong side of the ledger, they arranged for an interview with Secretary Knox which took place two days later, on September 3rd. Mr. Davison and Mr. Schiff, accompanied by Willard Straight, represented the banking group.

On the steps of 1718 H. St. where Willard Straight lived in Washington

Their object in seeking this conference was to reach an understanding with the Department about the future policy of the government and their own relation to it. They threatened to withdraw unless the administration modified its policy and relieved them of their dangerous responsibil-

ity. Mr. Knox quoted President Taft to the effect that their withdrawal was not to be dreamed of and tried to persuade them to support the government in any policy which it might adopt. But the upshot of a long conversation was the serving of a fairly clear notice on the Secretary of their profound disinclination to act as the instrument of an exclusive and aggressive American policy in China. They were willing to continue as the Department's financial agent but only on the understanding that they would be under no obligation to seek or accept contracts which aroused the irreconcilable opposition of other powers.

It was under the circumstances both a sound and an important position for the Group to assume. As I pointed out in the last chapter, the American government was not physically or morally prepared to back up with force its assertion of American rights in China under the principle of the "open door." Nor was the "open door" a principle which adapted itself to vindication by force. Its vitality depended on consent. When the banking Group shrank from the consequences to themselves of asserting it by force while at the same time refusing to withdraw from China, they took two decisions whose combination committed them to devise ways of obtaining the consent of the other powers to a realization of the "open door" into that country. They were assuming an obligation to seek further railroad or other loans to China only with the guarantee of general acquiescence. The method of competing for Chinese concessions had resulted either in a deadlock or in the threat of war. If the foreign capitalists were to finance the economic development of China, they must substitute cooperation for competition and organize for the purpose an international league of banking Groups.

The time was ripe for the formation of such a league. The American, British, French and German Groups had reached an agreement in May about their respective shares in financing the Hukuang Railways. Encouraged by this success they had recently considered the possibility of an indefinite extension of this method of joint action. It seemed not only possible but probable that they would go on to negotiate a permanent international banking Consortium, which would be ready and willing to finance Chinese economic development to any amount. The Consortium would not disturb vested interests. It could not attempt, as the American Group under the leadership of the American government had attempted, to rescue Manchuria from the grip of Japan and Russia. It could not deal with past and existing violations of the principle of the "open door." But it would put into practice the best possible application of that principle to the practical job of financing the future economic development of China. Instead of fighting over such concessions and cutting each other's throats, they would divide the opportunities and the profits under a general rule of equal participation.

A few weeks after this interview between Secretary Knox and the representatives of the Group, the whole aspect of the loan negotiations was altered by a new proposal which the Chinese submitted to the American government. On September 23rd they asked the State Department to obtain a loan from the American bankers for the reform of the Chinese currency. It may seem strange after the previous miscarriage of American diplomacy in China that the Chinese should turn to America for aid and comfort. There was, however, in this case, a special reason. The reform of the currency, with which was associated the abolition of

the oppressive internal taxes on commerce and the increase of the customs, had always headed the list of fiscal and administrative changes which progressive Chinese had most ardently desired. Its achievement was an indispensable condition of the economic development of China and of the infusion of order into her fiscal business. Americans had expressed a more sincere and a less selfish interest in these Chinese reforms than had the citizens of any other Western country. The Chinese had sought their assistance in the past. In November 1908 Tang-Shao-Yi, just before his recall to Peking, had started negotiations in Washington for a large loan to be used in part for currency reform. It was natural, consequently, that the Chinese should turn to the United States when in their opinion the time had come to renew the proposal.

They first asked for a loan of 50,000,000 taels, but on October 2nd suggested its increase to $50,000,000. The object of the increase was to provide a special fund of 20,000,000 taels for Manchurian development. Both parties being willing, the negotiations proceeded rapidly and on October 27th a preliminary agreement was signed in Peking for the loan between the Chinese government and D. A. de Menocal, who represented the American Group in the Far East during Willard Straight's absence, for a loan not to exceed $50,000,000 at five percent, which the Group agreed to buy at 95. The terms of this preliminary agreement were, however, extremely vague in other respects. It postponed for future consideration the nature of the security which the lenders would insist on exacting.

The nature of the security was always the chief bone of contention between Chinese borrowers and Western lenders. The latter had consistently tried to safeguard their

loans by guarantees which deprived the Chinese of control over Chinese economic enterprises. In the case of the Manchurian railways, for instance, first Russia and then Japan had used their ownership of these roads as an excuse for policing their property, for controlling the neighboring mines and for many other interferences with the ability of the Chinese to remain masters in their own house. The negotiations about other railway concessions had developed analogous conflicts. The agreements under which British capital was loaned to finance railway construction before the Boxer uprising provided as security a first mortgage on the road, a share in the profits, supervision of the expenditure of the money, and after operation began a share in the management. The Chinese had vigorously and persistently protested against the rigor of these terms, but for the most part without avail.

In the spring of 1908 the German Group, as the reader may recall, stole a march on their British and French competitors by offering to lend to the Chinese government the money needed to build the Canton-Hankow Railway on decidedly better conditions. According to this new form of contract, already embodied in the so-called Tientsin-Pukow Agreement of 1908, no mortgage on the property was given. The earnings of the road or certain provincial taxes were considered sufficient to provide for the interest on the loan and in the case of default the Imperial Maritime Customs Service was designated as receiver. Joint management was also abandoned. The bankers, however, successfully stipulated for the employment of foreign engineers during the construction of the line and the life of the loan and for the regular inspection of the accounts of the railway by foreign auditors. But they were never satisfied with this form of

contract which in their opinion did not sufficiently safeguard the enterprise against peculation in the accounts or against inefficiency in management.

The security which was to be required for the proposed Currency Loan raised a similar group of questions. The Chinese government preferred to do business with the American Group because Americans had shown a disposition to pay more attention to their susceptibilities and to grant them a better bargain; and politically it was of the utmost importance to the government to secure liberal terms for such a large increase of its debt. A contract which provided for safeguards similar to those embodied in the British railroad loans would be tantamount to the supervision of the finances of the Chinese government by the representatives of its creditors and to a grave impairment of its administrative independence. The government was beginning to be worried by increasing signs of popular discontent with its rule. If it were obliged further to compromise the administrative independence of China in order to obtain this Currency Loan, it anticipated and feared a rapid and alarming increase of this discontent.

The signing of the agreement between the Chinese government and the American Group for the Currency Loan raised in an interesting and an acute form all the more difficult questions of the Group's future policy. Should they share the responsibilities and profits of this operation with the foreign banking Groups? If they went ahead alone, would they possess sufficient resources to finance the reform of the Chinese currency? To what extent would the cooperation of the other foreign nations who were interested in China be necessary in order to make the reform of the currency a success? Finally, how would the Chinese like the

idea of dealing with a combination of banking Groups rather than with separate national banking Groups?

According to the standards which had previously prevailed in Chinese finance, they had every justification in going ahead alone. There existed even some measure of obligation on their part to preserve their independence. The Chinese had applied to the American Group for the money precisely because it still occupied a semi-independent position and because it combined independence with a more sincere and less selfish interest in Chinese welfare. The Chinese practice for a generation had been to play off one foreign government or one group of financiers against another. The Chinese government considered them as adversaries rather than friends and it expected to profit from their quarrels more than from their agreement. If the American Group with the approval of the American government had entered into a combination with the French, British and German Groups, the Chinese government would have regarded the arrangement much as American consumers would regard the formation of a trust to exercise complete economic control over the price and supply of some necessity of life. There was, consequently, a question whether, if the American Group divided up its contract for the Currency Loan with the other banking Groups, it could not be accused of betraying the confidence of the Chinese.

Willard Straight felt many misgivings about a complete sacrifice of independence by the American Group. Much as he believed in cooperation with the foreign bankers, he had not reconciled himself as yet to the necessity of an all-embracing offensive and defensive alliance. The Chinese had brought the Currency Loan to the American Group on the understanding that it was to be the sole negotiator, and

the Group had welcomed the overture and agreed to float the Loan. At the same time the leaders of the Group had definitely decided in the future not to pursue an isolated American policy in China and were discussing with the European Groups a quadruple combination. They had informed the Chinese of their intention to issue part of the Currency Loan in Europe; and to this the Chinese did not object provided the American Group were the only signatory to the contract. But if the American Group were the only signatory to the contract, the administration of its terms and guarantees would remain exclusively in American hands, and to this the European banking groups would not consent. They insisted, if they were to furnish part of the money, upon obtaining the status of co-signatories with their American associates. It sometimes looked to Willard Straight, consequently, as if the American Group would have to act alone in order to avoid breaking faith with the Chinese.

But the obstacles to an independent policy were, as Willard Straight also well knew, almost insuperable. Among them the one which looked most insuperable to the members of the Group as practical bankers was the knowledge of their inability to float any very large volume of Chinese securities on the American market. They were offering to lend money to China not because American investors were interested in business opportunities in the Far East, but because the State Department wished to promote American influence in China. They were obliged to consider first of all how and when they could redistribute the burden of the proposed Loans, and they felt themselves dependent in this respect on the money markets of London, Paris and Berlin.

That was one very practical reason why they did not dare

to keep the whole of the Currency Loan for themselves. But there were other reasons no less practical. Even if they could have floated a $50,000,000 Chinese Loan in the United States, the Chinese government could not, under existing treaties have used the money for the reform of the currency and the system of taxation without the consent of the European governments and financiers. The success of the whole transaction depended not only on disarming the hostility of European politicians and financiers, but upon winning their active cooperation. If China insisted on dealing exclusively with Americans, she would from her own point of view make a mistake. The ultimate result of a Chinese-American combination could only have been a repetition of the Chinchow-Aigun fiasco.

It was with his mind divided by these conflicting considerations that, towards the end of October, Willard Straight left New York. In view of the new questions of urgent importance initiated by the proposed Currency Loan his chiefs had decided that they needed him again in Peking, and he took the journey as usual by way of Europe in order to transact en route some business in London and Paris. This business consisted in discussing with the European bankers the basis of possible cooperation in financing not only the Currency Loan but all future investments of European and American capital in Chinese railroad and government securities. They had begun negotiations for a Four Power Consortium by correspondence and it was Willard Straight's most important task to use the Currency Loan as a favorable opportunity for carrying them to a conclusion.

He reached London on October 31st, 1910, and was kept there by interbank conferences until November 10th. On that day he signed for the American Group an agree-

ment with the other Groups which at the time looked fairly satisfactory. The agreement provided for the pooling of profits, opportunities and responsibilities of future Chinese financing, but it granted to the American Group a somewhat independent position with respect to the Currency Loan and the Chinchow-Aigun Railroad. While the American Group pledged itself to press on the Chinese government the advantage of consenting to the admission of the other Groups as co-signatories to the contract for the Currency Loan, it entered into no pledge which prevented it from subsequently resuming its freedom of action with respect to these two enterprises.

At the time he negotiated this contract Willard Straight still cherished an expectation of reviving the concession for the Chinchow-Aigun Railroads. One of the results he hoped to accomplish by American participation in the Four Power Consortium, and by the admission of the French, British and German Groups as co-signatories to the contract for the Currency Loan, was to obtain their support for American enterprise in Manchuria. The Manchurian projects always engaged his liveliest personal interest. He still believed it possible to build up with the aid of the money-lending nations a fortress against the hostile pressure of Japan and Russia sufficiently solid to guard the "open door" into Manchuria. The event did not vindicate this belief. For the time being Manchuria was lost. It proved impossible to reserve for the American Group special privileges and responsibilities in any particular region which the other members of the Consortium would in practice permit their American associates to exercise.

But it was natural for an American to fall into such a mistake. A Consortium of banking groups was an innova-

tion in international finance and no one knew just how it would work. Inasmuch as all the Groups were engaged in promoting the economic development of China, an observer might reasonably have anticipated that the Consortium would tend to strengthen the principle of the "open door" and that of Chinese territorial integrity. During its brief existence it did not work that way. It acted essentially as an agency of conservatism. It accomplished something for the welfare of China; it affirmed the principle of the "open door" by erecting a barrier against any further aggression by Japan in China; but it also erected a barrier against any assault by the American Group on the vested interests in China which Japan or Great Britain or Germany already possessed. While it was a necessary instrument at the moment for preventing the economic development of China by means of foreign capital from becoming a dangerous threat to the peace of the world, it was a very imperfect instrument whose adoption necessarily involved the postponement of more radical and disinterested projects for the emancipation and development of China.

CHAPTER XI

ON PROBATION

ON November 11th, 1910, Willard Straight started from London on his fourth journey to China. As on previous occasions he was going out to undertake what was substantially a new job and also as before he cherished high hopes of success in heading up a prolonged and difficult piece of work. Hitherto he had been engaged in ploughing and planting. Now he must reap a harvest, if harvest there was to be.

At the time of his fourth departure, however, he carried in his breast a new interest which possessed him more completely than any interest had ever possessed him before. He had left behind a woman with whom he was in love, who was not indifferent to him but who had not consented to marry him. He hoped and longed to persuade her to marry him. His cravings and aspirations instead of being fastened exclusively on his personal career and his diplomatic enterprises were divided between his work in China and the woman he loved in New York.

In November 1909 just as he was finishing his new Peking residence he had received a visit from Mrs. George Bend, Miss Beatrice Bend and Miss Dorothy Whitney who had reached China on a tour around the world. He had met Miss Whitney, daughter of the late Mr. W. C. Whitney, during the spring of 1909. She was planning her journey at that time and after he had accepted his appointment as representative of the American Group in

Peking, he had offered to do what he could to make her visit to China agreeable. He was as good as his word. "On a clear November day in the autumn of 1909," she writes, "as the Manchurian train drew into the station at Peking, a tall, fair, erect young man stood on the platform to greet the incoming travellers. After an exchange of greetings he at once took command of our affairs and almost in spite of ourselves we were delivered into his hands. Already in Manchuria he had made us aware of his kindly solicitude and interest. Arriving at Antung late one night, when the icy wind blowing across the Yalu River had frozen us to the marrow and when nothing had ever seemed as desolate as the sight of that city, we suddenly heard a kindly voice inquiring if we were Willard Straight's friends and in need of any attention. We proceeded, of course, to fall on the neck of this ministering angel, who revealed himself as Lewis Palen, an official of the Imperial Maritime Customs in Antung. He had received a telegram from his old friend Willard Straight in Peking, he said, warning him of our arrival and asking him to meet us and to speed us on our way. Thanks to Mr. Palen, Antung assumed a more friendly aspect.

"Again in Mukden we were unexpectedly confronted by evidences of Willard's forethought and kindness. He had sent his own 'boy' up to meet us and to act as our guide and courier during our sojourn there. He had furthermore sent us letters of introduction to his good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Willis of H. B. M.'s Consulate, and to certain important Chinese officials. Later when the day for our departure arrived we discovered that his 'Chinese boy' had made special arrangements for our journey to Peking, having procured a little private car for us and a most wonderful cook

Henry Fletcher, Miss Beatrice Bend and Willard Straight at Chamonix in July, 1910

thrown in. We made the twenty-four hour journey in the greatest comfort, and arrived in Peking feeling profoundly grateful for Mr. Straight's attentions, but fully determined to accept no further favors from him. Our resolutions were short-lived. On the station platform we had our first encounter. He urged us to move into one of the Legation houses and establish ourselves there. We proudly and firmly protested and insisted on our independence even at the cost of hotel bedrooms. So to the hotel we went. But after two days we ignominiously relented and moved over into the Legation Compound.

"At that time the Legation was without its Minister, and Henry Fletcher, the First Secretary, was acting as Chargé d'Affaires. He and Willard, who had been living with him, moved upon our arrival, into the big Legation building thus vacating the First Secretary's house for us. For the

first time since leaving America, four months earlier, we had a sense of being at home. Henry Fletcher and Willard lived and worked next door, and we ladies maintained an independent existence in their former habitation—where we still entertained them at meals. They both evidenced a friendly though somewhat impersonal interest in us, their chief concern being that we should understand and enjoy China and that they should act as our interpreters.

"Negotiations over the Hukuang Loan were pending at that time, but being a diplomatic rather than a business matter, Willard found himself comparatively free from official duties. He therefore devoted his time to our education, revealing to us every corner of the city he loved. Early in the mornings we would start off in our rickshaws for some temple or quaint bit of street; and in the afternoons we would ride, sometimes circling the City Wall, sometimes out along the canals to outlying temples and ruins on the plain. Late in the evenings a walk along the Wall was always imperative in order to see the sunset and to watch the transformation of the landscape, the gold of the plain melting into the purple of the Western Hills. And from the Wall we could always hear, as well as see, the life of the great city below. The cries of the street vendors, the strange plaintive singing, the howl of the dogs, the rumbling of the carts and rickshaws would blend into a peculiar melody, jarring yet harmonious, individual yet fused, the curious haunting sound of China that vibrates in my memory still.

"Day by day the magic of Peking grew upon us. In witnessing the funeral of the Great Empress Dowager we were permitted to see something of the pageantry of Chinese life, but our days for the most part were spent in absorbing the

glories of the past. Our hosts insisted that we should meet, not only the foreigners of the Legations, but the leading Chinese and Manchu officials. And so it was that we gave little dinners to which two or three Chinese were invited at a time. And in persuading one Manchu Princess to dine with us we broke all the precedents of Imperial etiquette and instituted new customs for the ladies of the court.

"Through all these events ran the current of a personal drama. Willard Straight stood out from his background in clear, sharp outline. With his fluent use of the Chinese language he acted as interpreter everywhere—chatting gaily with the priests in the temples, with the curio dealers, and street vendors, and with mandarins and members of the Imperial Manchu Court. He had always a quick word that brought a laugh to their lips and disarmed formality at once. He met them all with an ease and naturalness that indicated a warm human understanding and a perfect orientation in the country.

"Another vivid memory of those days is Willard with his guitar, singing his own melodies to the Kipling songs of the East—songs of the far-flung battle line of Empire—of vagabondage and adventure and wanderings over sea.

"Then one day came a trip to the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs, and after that, things were forever different. The magic of China seemed to fade before the magic of a human personality. The interest of the living dominated the glories of the dead. We had suddenly become conscious of something new stirring within us though we spoke not a word of it to each other. Finally when the day of departure came we walked together to the station along the City Wall. We talked of trivial things in order to make

sure of ourselves, and we dared not linger to look out over the great city for the last time together. The fullness of the whole experience was surging over us, but our objective was the station and we had fortunately not much time to lose. Beyond the station lay a wide ocean of separation that we dared not contemplate. Our minds could not fathom the future. It seemed impenetrable, engulfing—we could only trust and walk into it. But as the train drew out of the station I knew that thereafter life was utterly changed."

The departing guests left behind them a man who was flushed and bewildered with the happiness which the new bond had brought but who at the same time was rendered almost desperate by its temporary rupture. The inevitable period of separation looked too long and too dreary. Although he had no sufficient excuse for accompanying or pursuing them to Shanghai, he seriously contemplated some such attempt to run away from his loneliness. It required all his self-control to prevent him from taking the risk.

Thereafter for Willard also life looked different. An enduring as well as an overwhelming passion took possession of him. He ached to win the love and earn the confidence of Dorothy Whitney. He succeeded, but only after a long period of probation, the uncertainty of which distressed him deeply. Yet the separation from Miss Whitney and the necessity of bridling his impulse and of patiently overcoming her scruples were an education to him as well as a sore trial. His love for her, the patient and tender tenacity with which he sought to obtain her consent to their marriage and her growing love for him strengthened and mellowed the substance of his mind. It became a creative ferment—the more of a ferment because he did not win an easy victory. Doubts

about the success of his suit plunged him into moments of anxious self-distrust; the mixture of the uncertainty with his passion and aspiration intensified and illumined the glow of his conscious life. His love for Dorothy Whitney swelled into a massive tide of feeling which transformed his spirit into a procession of exalted anticipations, visions and affirmations.

All that was best in Willard had waited for this signal to rise to the surface. He was for the most part a man of objective practical interests. He fastened his attention upon what he could see and hear and do, and he possessed the active man's repugnance for sentimental distractions. His projects, his ambitions and public ideals had provided his energy with motives and his mind with food. Like all normal young men, he had flirted and he had fallen in love, but these excursions were never more than minor interludes between the pulse beats of his real business in life. He was to all appearances a good example of a man's man who was interested only incidentally in women. Yet the appearance was deceptive. He was peculiarly susceptible to the influence of women and peculiarly dependent upon their sympathy and companionship. He needed intimacy and correspondence with a woman as the focus and leaven of his restless and versatile disposition, and his steady refusal theretofore to treat the other sex as a distraction was the prophetic expression of this need.

When an American or European leaves his native country in his youth and takes up his residence in Africa, Japan or China, he exposes himself to a severe test. The standards of sexual conduct of a group of Americans and Europeans living among a barbarous or a differently civilized people are lower than they would be at home. Such

communities contain an unusually large proportion of single men who have fewer reasons for avoiding irregularities than they would in New York or London and who for the most part feel no obligation to curb their inclinations or to disguise their misbehavior. Willard was in this respect a rare exception. He lived cleanly and it is essential to an understanding of him to know why. He was not indifferent or prudish. His attitude towards the irregularities of others was tolerant. He was too much of a man of the world to regard them as culpable. The scruple which kept him from following the example was more aesthetic than moral. Women were to him a symbol as well as a sex. To behave as a libertine was for some reason offensive to his spiritual taste.

The early influence of his mother almost certainly planted this scruple in the soil of his mind. It did not linger in the form of precepts, but the pattern of a tender and chivalrous respect for women was woven by her companionship with him as a baby and a little boy into the fabric of his nature. He inherited from her and she cultivated in him her ability to find a compensation for passion in the enterprises of the imagination.

Willard left behind him an expression of his attitude towards personal chastity. It reveals the relation which existed in his mind between sexual cleanliness in young men before marriage and their allegiance to their mothers. The night before he sailed for France in December 1917 he wrote a letter to his eldest son, which later I shall quote in full. The following passage from it helps us to understand the motives which determined part of his own behavior towards women: "My father died," he wrote, "when I was seven years old and I had no word save such as my

mother gave me. She was taken too before I knew what she meant. I trust for your sake and the sake of all three of you, your mother will be there to guide you. All the best in you comes from her, all the finest in you will be brought out by her. You are blessed as no other children have been blessed in your mother. May your worship for her—for it will be with you as it is with me, reverence and real worship —guide you and lead you to treat all women with chivalry. Save yourself and tell Michael to save himself that you may go clean and unashamed to her who will be your wife and the mother some day of your children. There will be many temptations, but when they come, think of your mother."

As a baby and a little boy his own mother had cultivated his sensibilities as to the effects of his behavior on other people. Headstrong and self-willed though he was, she had disposed him to behave considerately. His disposition in this respect helped him to resist temptations to which the majority of young men thoughtlessly but furtively succumb. It was she, too, who planted in him a chivalrous feeling towards women which rendered a cheap and vulgar relationship with them obnoxious. She herself, both in her weakness and her strength, invited chivalry on the part of those who loved and understood her. During their residence of two years in Japan after his father's death he was treated as the man of the household, which may have encouraged his masculine imagination to figure himself as the protector of his mother and sister from the perils of an outlandish environment. In these and other ways she helped to mold him into a man who would treat women with tender and grave attention and who would refrain from testifying to their attractions by joining in their pursuit.

The consideration with which he treated all women en-

abled him to give peculiar intensity to his idealization of one woman. He could devote to the earning of her love all the energy and aspiration of his soul because he had never cheapened his commerce with her sisters. His love took on the radiant concentration of a religious passion. He lived chiefly for that. All the other values and ventures of his life were bathed and refreshed in this flood of passion. Neither was it wasted on the woman he loved. She was capable of accepting and confirming the gift of his love. He could not expect to win and keep her unless he was vindicating that which was good in himself.

After Miss Whitney vanished from Peking late in November 1909 Willard, of course, immediately wrote to her. Only by constantly communicating with her could he soothe his aching heart and render their separation tolerable. Thereafter whenever they were parted writing to her became the most important part of the ritual of the day. She revived in him the craving for articulate expression which, since his practical occupations had become so absorbing, had not received enough satisfaction. It came back with redoubled intensity as soon as he had found the woman whom above everyone else he most desired to persuade and convince. He communicated to her indefatigably and eagerly all the doubts, conflicts, hesitations, experiments, exercises and confidences of his mind. His letters to her recorded exhaustively his activities, his ideas, his moods and his aspirations.

Dorothy Whitney and Willard Straight after they parted in Peking did not see each other for six months; but by means of a furious correspondence which, when letters palled and dragged, overflowed into cables, they steadily came to know and understand each other better. When he

reached Europe in May 1910, she had not yet returned to the United States and he was only waiting to see her in order to ask her to marry him. "The travellers" writes his wife "had meanwhile come up from Egypt into Italy and Willard found us in Milan one perfect morning in May. There were no pretenses then. After one brief word of greeting he told me why he had come. Standing against the door of our little sitting room with his hat still in his hand he poured out the yearning of his heart. Human nature does unaccountable things. I, who had been living for six months in anticipation of this day, suddenly found myself weak and uncertain. Confronted with the reality I drew back in hesitation and doubt. For two days we became eager explorers of Milan, sitting quietly in the big Cathedral, driving out to the Certosa at Pavia and renewing in countless ways the peculiar joy of discovering together new and beautiful things. Then on the third day we motored to Lake Maggiore. There Willard caught a train back to Paris, leaving me in a whirl of conflicting emotions.

"Throughout the summer we were much together—in Paris, in London, at Divonne, at Aix-les-Bains and in Switzerland. Although the passage of time brought me the certainty that I cared irresistibly, still I refused to face the ultimate decision. It involved such a complete break with the past, such a plunge into new surroundings and circumstances, such a separation from people I loved that I could not summon the courage to do it. Willard with deep insight and patience understood my indecision and tried to subordinate his own intense yearning to my miserable vacillation; but it was hard for both of us, and in the autumn he left for Peking with a heavy heart but an indomitable faith."

At the time Willard started for Peking she had not accepted him but neither had she dismissed him. He remained a favored suitor for her hand who had almost but not quite succeeded in overcoming her hesitation; and this standing, unsatisfactory as it was, only made him the more eager to make himself known to her and to convince her. She remained in Europe for a couple of months after he was summoned to New York late in July 1910; and it was during this renewed separation that his letters became a daily confession of what he did and of what he was. They met again for a few days after her return to the United States and before his departure. When he sailed for Europe he was still neither accepted nor rejected, but although his standing was doubtful, he was sufficiently hopeful to write to her as he would write only to a woman to whom he was dedicated for life.

CHAPTER XII

THE CURRENCY LOAN

IT was on November 11th that he boarded the train for Peking. Three days later he reached St. Petersburg where he had an interesting talk with his former chief, Mr. Rockhill, who was still serving as Ambassador to Russia. During their period of joint service in China, there had been some friction between them, but it had passed. Willard wrote to Miss Whitney about his former and his present relationship to Mr. Rockhill in words whose truth is creditable to both of them.* "I found him a most charming man, as I always knew I should once I was no longer his subordinate. I didn't have it out, but I shall some day, and I think we shall be very good friends. I am quite willing to admit my own unruliness, but I insist that he did not stand for progress. Had he had his way we would never have been where we are, but since we are here, I am all for taking his advice to proceed carefully and conservatively. We must now try to fortify ourselves in a position which we have attained by rather daring means."

On November 27th he was back again in Peking. "The arrival at the station," he writes, "was wonderful to see. There was a horde of servants and a number of Americans, a great arch of fireworks with a placard 'Welcome home to Mr. Straight' hanging therefrom. They had decorated the courtyard (of his house) with plants, had swung red lan-

*Unless otherwise specified all the quotations in this chapter are from letters to Dorothy Whitney.

terns at the gates and had placed a floral arch over a little gateway into the inner court. Everybody apparently, foreigners and Chinese, were sincerely glad to see me." They had reason to be. A man with Willard's disposition and gifts for being kind, attentive, generous and entertaining was an immense boon in a little ingrowing society like that of the foreigners in Peking.

He arrived at a tense moment, when the air of Peking was electric with the foreboding of coming storms and when the people in power, both native and foreign, were trying either to divert the deluge or were seeking cover. The economic and political tendencies which had prevailed since Japan's victory over Russia were now reaching their first moment of culmination and were about to produce unexpected and revolutionary effects upon China and upon the relation between China and the Western world. In order to understand the issues and the difficulties which the negotiations about the Currency Loan raised in the path of Willard Straight, we must consider for a moment what this foreign community in Peking was now doing in China and how China was reacting to the operation.

In China the Eastern point of view as a permanent fact in civilization and the modern scientific industrial societies of the West were coming for the first time into a real collision. They had already collided during the late 18th century in India, and the West had won an easy and deceptive physical victory, the fruits of which came euphemistically to be described as the White Man's Burden. Throughout the 19th century the white man scoured the East in the effort to increase the number of brown and yellow and black men upon whom he could confer the benefits of law and order. A second collision occurred in Japan, in which the

West won an easy moral victory. A talented and imitative Eastern people, dressed up in the clothes of Western nationalism, entered the Yellow Man into competition with the White for a share in the government and capitalist exploitation of Asia. But throughout this invasion of the East by the West there was one Eastern people, the Chinese, which stubbornly tried to evade the manifest destiny of being carried burdensomely but profitably on the shoulders of Western or apostate Eastern nations. They had been unable to escape all penetration. Other nations, white or yellow, had relieved them of the responsibility of governing outlying regions and lucrative centres of maritime commerce, or they had appropriated some of the more accessible Chinese natural resources. Many individual Chinese had profited by playing the accomplice to this process of penetration. But the invasion had not as yet won either a physical or a moral victory over the Chinese. They had not consented to what was being done to them. They were fighting for the exercise of the right, if not to reject the technology of the West, at least to accept it in their own way and on their own terms.

The Boxer rebellion was a savage revolt on the part of the Chinese people against the sheer piracy which the Western Powers practised upon China during the last years of the 19th century. Like so many violent revolts against the abuses of government, it succeeded no less than it failed. Crushed though it was, it resulted in a belated attempt by the American government to protect China, and, except in those regions where the treaties sanctioned political and economic exploitation, it substituted slow, indirect, economic penetration for frank political piracy. By the winter of 1910-11 the mixture of economic penetration by foreign

Sketch of Lord ffrench by Willard Straight

capitalist groups with the aggressive exercise by foreign nations of their treaty rights in various parts of China had again caused a grave condition of unrest among the Chinese

people. The fermentation was more active in the south than in the north. It was particularly active in several parts of the provinces of Hupeh and Szechuan, where the local gentry were protesting against the proposed concession for the Hukuang railroads. Its existence had frightened the Chinese government into summoning for consultation certain provincial assemblies; and it had something to do with the proposals for the Currency Loan. Unless the Manchus could reform the currency, they could not eradicate the abuses of the system of internal taxation and increase the customs dues; and in the eyes of all Chinese the increase in the customs dues to a level considerably higher than the existing flat rate of five per cent was essential to their future fiscal and political independence.

The Manchu government of China was wedged in a tight place. It had cleared the Boxer outbreak by bending to the wind, but its chiefs realized that a new explosion of popular discontent might be directed to getting rid of them rather than of the foreigners. It was trying to ward off the blow by a program of reform of which the Currency Loan was the beginning, but in negotiating for the Currency Loan the Manchus could not give their consent to provisions which damaged their own prestige. They could not afford to offer security for the loan which their Chinese enemies could condemn as indicative of a too servile attitude towards foreigners. That was why the government applied to the American Group. It expected the American Group to be more lenient and to pay more attention to Chinese susceptibilities.

There was one kind of security which the American government and the American bankers both required, but which the Chinese were extremely reluctant to grant. They demanded some assurance that the money which they loaned

to China would be efficiently and honestly expended on the reform of the Chinese currency, and to that end they had proposed from the first the appointment of an American as a financial adviser to the Chinese government in carrying out the reform. The Chinese were unwilling to consent to the appointment of an adviser for many reasons, but chiefly because they remembered and feared the fate of Egypt, and because they anticipated that an adviser with too much authority and too little responsibility to Chinese public opinion might seek to impose upon them a currency system based on the gold standard. The yielding to the demand for the appointment of an adviser was a perfect example of the kind of security which an inefficient and tottering ruling class could ill afford to give. It compelled them at a moment when their authority was being challenged in China to admit in a public document their own incapacity or dishonesty, and they dreaded the admission all the more when they learned of the desire of the European groups to become co-signatories to the Loan. It looked to them like the beginning of a financial protectorate over China, exercised for the protectors' benefit by European and American bankers. They well knew that if they agreed to any further impairment of the administrative independence of China, there would follow an enormous and perhaps an irresistible increase of discontent with the Manchu government.

Willard Straight understood much better than did the American government and bankers why the Chinese government was so reluctant to incorporate in the original Loan Agreement an ironclad provision for a financial adviser. He agreed with his chiefs about the need of effective supervision over the spending of the money but, knowing as he did the importance of prestige in the eyes of the Chinese,

Willard Straight and William J. Calhoun taken during the winter of 1910-11

he wished to arrange for the supervision without any unnecessary loss of "face" by the Chinese officials. He proposed in a letter written from Paris on November 13th to his New York chiefs to meet the difficulty by an interchange of notes between the American and Chinese governments regarding the appointment of an American to the post of adviser, so that the Chinese could yield to the request of the American government rather than to the demand of the bankers. "Were this done," he writes, "reference could then be made in the detailed Loan Agreement to the 'foreign adviser' by China under the interchange of notes with the American government, dated——" and a provision could be inserted associating the adviser with the Board of Revenue in the expenditure of the funds. He proposed further, in order to meet both the Chinese wish for American signa-

ture alone and the European wish for joint signature "that the American Group sign alone, the agreement signed being supplemented by another Agreement to which the Chinese government and all four Groups shall be parties."

When he reached Peking he plunged immediately into a pond of diplomatic hot water which it was his business to cool off and calm down. The difficulties were enormous. The chief difficulty was the Chinese government itself, which, because of its fears and its ulterior motives, was both shifty and stubborn, fussy and absent-minded. But it also required a large amount of patient explanation to convince the Group in New York and the State Department in Washington of the necessity, if the Currency Loan was to go through, of not dealing too roughly with Chinese susceptibilities. He had the advantage of corresponding with the Group through a man, Mr. Henry P. Davison, who was considerate, attentive and sympathetic, but it was not easy to clear up misconceptions by means of cables and letters. Willard frequently felt disheartened at the apparent impossibility of getting his chiefs in Washington and in New York to understand the psychological realities of a political or business transaction in Peking.

He had opposition to contend with as well as hesitation and misunderstanding. He soon became convinced that both Russia and Japan were intriguing against the consummation of an agreement with respect to the Currency Loan between the bankers and the Chinese government. Knowing as they did how much the success of the plan might make for eventual Chinese fiscal and political independence, the Russians and the Japanese could not regard the possible success of this new development in Chinese financial policy with complacency. They had nothing to gain from lending

money to China, for they were not capital-exporting nations. But they had much to lose from the financial and political strengthening of China, for a strong China would imperil the security of their vested privileges in Manchuria. Willard anticipated this opposition, but he expected to overcome it with the help of the British, the French and the German groups. In this expectation he was partly disappointed. Messrs. Hillier and Cordes, who represented respectively British and German capital, were lukewarm about the Currency Loan. A part of the business of their banks was created by the confusion and abuses of the Chinese currency and they feared a loss of profits as a consequence of reform. Their support was of less than no use to Willard Straight during the trying negotiations of the Peking winter.

At the head of the French Group, on the other hand, he had in M. Maurice Casenave a warm personal friend and an able and disinterested ally. M. Casenave's help was invaluable and indispensable. He himself refers to one matter in which his own services were of the utmost importance. "The suspicion," he says, "which the American Group had encountered in the European banks had been somewhat shared by the diplomats. At any rate there did not exist between the French and American political representatives in China that mutual confidence which is indispensable to the success of affairs carried on in common. Here was a serious difficulty for Willard Straight and for me. It was overcome because these two men, who were equally intelligent and straightforward, were made to understand one another. But the rapprochement between Mr. William J. Calhoun, United States Minister, and M. de Margerie, Minister of France, was due to the tact and

diplomacy of Willard Straight. They did not know each other. Willard Straight first brought them together intimately at his own house. But he did better. A few intimate friends who lived in Peking, Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun, M. de Margerie, Major and Mrs. Russell, M. and Mme. D. de Menocal, Lord ffrench, Willard Straight and myself met once a week at the house of each member in turn. Here we discussed with passion, like Pico della Mirandola 'de omni re scibili et de quibusdam aliis,' politics, political economy, philosophy, history, above all the American and French Revolutions."

The assistance of the American Minister, Mr. William J. Calhoun, was as indispensable and as invaluable as that of M. Casenave. Considering the important part played by the State Department in the negotiation and, from Willard's point of view, its frequent misunderstanding of the situation in Peking, he could not possibly have succeeded if the American Minister had happened to be a man of unsound judgment or wavering loyalty. Willard was delighted from the start with this association with Mr. Calhoun. He writes on the day after his arrival. "A very busy day. Hours with the Minister who is really a corker. He is sound, clear-headed and absolutely straight and fearless, which is splendid, and he has a nice line of profanity which I greatly appreciate. . . . The Minister and I are in absolute accord that we have a very narrow path to walk with the Chinese on the one side and the banks on the other." And he writes to Mr. Davison a week later, "Mr. Calhoun, the Minister, is a tower of strength. He has gained Chinese confidence to a remarkable degree, is shrewd, sound and forceful. The thing that impresses me most about him is his absolute honesty. He would rather chuck

his post, the service and anything else than be a party to any transaction which he did not consider right." The way in which after a couple of weeks of negotiations his difficulties and prospects looked to Willard is vividly reported in a letter written by him to Mr. Frank McKnight, the Secretary of the Group. "We are now up against a stiff fight. The Group perhaps may not have been entirely pleased with the suggestions that I telegraphed, but we can't get anything more, and we'll have the devil's own time getting even these. To begin with, I arrived here to find everyone suspicious and disgruntled by the London Agreement.* This impression we removed I think. Bang came another shock when we began to talk of the financial adviser. We are dealing with two men of quite a different personality. Duke Tsai Tse, head of the Treasury, is honest, patriotic, rather dull and very narrow-minded—as obstinate as a mule and as suspicious. X is one of the most astute crooks in all the galaxy of the mandarinate. He wants squeeze, the Duke wants to save China's face. They neither of them therefore want a foreign adviser with any power. Associated with them is one Chen Chin Tao, of the Ta Ching Bank. He is well educated, an expert mathematician, can talk of exchanges, bonds, stocks, unearned increment, the curb market and the history of currency. This load of information sits heavily on his stomach, like an unripe dumpling, and makes him peevish and truculent. Chen sits by the Duke's side and gives all manner of arguments why China should not have a proper adviser, that if she took an American all the other Powers would demand one also, and that China must be strong and independent. He also urges the objection which the Senate, now in ses-

*The agreement mentioned at the end of Chapter X.

Sketch by Willard Straight of William J. Calhoun

sion, would have to any Foreign Adviser, and the Duke comes back at us with all these arguments."

A few days earlier he had written to Miss Whitney about this same Chen. "He was here this afternoon and let himself in nicely. He showed his hand by trying to bluff me. It is pretty plain that the opposition to an American adviser is largely if not entirely due to Chen's desire to have his own scheme for currency reform adopted and to his fear that, should an American come in, he himself might be overshadowed. He threatened me with the new Senate and all

the terrors of popular agitation. I told him we would rather chuck the Loan now than lend the money without protecting China by making satisfactory provision for a carefully considered scheme of currency reform. The best part of dealing with a man like Chen is that, although he is insolent and a shrimp, he is very intelligent so that he cannot but recognize the strength of our arguments." In another letter about the same time he adds: "Two weeks of Peking and not much further on save that some of the brush is cut away and the ground cleared for the real fight. As I look back over them they seem almost the most intense I have ever spent in clear concentration on one single object. I have eaten it, slept it, lived it all every moment.

"The Chinese game begins to become clearer now. We could devise a perfectly satisfactory plan for control but I am sure that the break would come over joint signature. The Chinese, I think, want to break up our Bankers' Agreement. They hate the thought that they cannot, as long as this agreement exists, use their old tactics of playing us off one against the other. From their point of view this is very short-sighted. The creation of a strong quadruple banking Group to handle investments all through China would be their best insurance against a revival of the old spheres of influence idea. It would be especially effective against Russia and Japan in Manchuria. But they have no one big enough to see it."

December 21st, 1910. "The Group have taken a fair and intelligent stand, but they stated that although they approved my suggestion as to the basis for negotiation with the Chinese, I was to do nothing until the Minister, who had been fully instructed, had arranged with the Chinese for an adviser and for control of the Loan proceeds. The De-

partment's telegram to Calhoun was utter rot. They have told him to insist that China appoint an American adviser who shall have 'a certain measure of authority.' How, when and where this authority shall be applied, in connection with what undertaking and for what reason he should be appointed, they do not specify. The rest of the telegram consists of pious generalities about helping China's broader interests, the friendliness of the American government and the apparent indifference of China. They apparently fail to realize that to secure the realization of 'broader interests' in China's welfare, they must first put through this Loan, and that as long as they telegraph general instructions about an adviser without clearly establishing his relation to the Loan, just so long will both hang fire.

"The whole country seems knit together behind the provincial assemblies in the most remarkable manner. It's the growth of the last two years, and is due largely to the spread of newspapers all over the empire, and their passing from the control of the returned students to that of a much more sober and reputable element—the literati and merchants, who are of a very high order of intelligence and who, though patriotic and radical, are still sound and in many respects conservative. Gatrell tells me that the leading articles in some of the Chinese journals are remarkably able. However, one is always inclined to discount the probable effect of words in China, for though no force is more potent, no currency in the world is more debased. In this land, above all others, the shadow has for years passed for the substance, notwithstanding the virile practicality of the people as regards material things."

Christmas, 1910. "The Regent came out with an Edict yesterday which will make trouble. He called down the Vice-

The heads of the four Groups in Peking during the negotiations for the Currency Loan

roys of Manchuria, Chili, Tientsin and Liang Kiang, (Nanking) for allowing agitation among students in favor of a national assembly, prior even to 1913, and the Chinese say that this Edict will be enforced even with troops if

necessary. Of course the central government, if it was going to be strong at all, should have put the lid on popular agitation before granting the Parliament in 1913 instead of 1917, the date originally settled. Suddenly to show nerve now may bring on a general row, not against foreigners but against the central government. There is little doubt but that the Japanese are behind it all. They urge the central government to be strong and suppress popular agitation on the one hand and to stir up all sorts of parliamentary fervor on the other."

January 5th, 1911. Extract from a letter to Mr. Henry P. Davison: "It is, however, almost as impossible for you to appreciate, as it is for me to describe, the atmosphere of pettiness and suspicion which prevails here, where everyone more or less is spying on everyone else. It is the storm centre of world politics, and the foreign community is very small. We see each other nearly every day; there are but few outside influences or diversions; and this all brings out the little meannesses and jealousies and the spitefulness of human nature. Because one man does not invite another to dinner, because A's wife doesn't call on B's, B curses A and blocks his business. A invites B to dinner and pumps him dry, and if B be weak or vain or bibulous, the chances are A will learn things he wanted to know and which B had no business to divulge. The whole place is filled with rumors and suspicions. Youngsters who know things often receive consideration to which neither their age nor position entitles them from older men who wish thus to acquire information."

January 13th, 1911. "Still another day has gone by and not a word from New York. Over two weeks now since the Minister telegraphed for final instructions and he has

heard nothing. It is twelve days since I telegraphed the result of my conference with Sheng, and four days even since I merely wired for information as to when we probably might expect something, and asked for authority to draw some money. Not a single word have we received though the Minister also telegraphed on Tuesday begging for instructions that will enable us to do something. I cannot understand it. Six weeks here and not a thing to show for it, save a large cable account spent in trying to prevent New York and the Department from butting into the stone wall of Chinese opposition when we could easily get around."

January 15th, 1911. "The Department and the Group finally loosened up with telegrams yesterday, which should enable us to start work once more. The former showed more sense than any they've sent up to date, but were still vague. The Group's message showed either that they hadn't read either my letters or my telegrams, or else that they've paid no attention to either. I can't blame them exactly, for they've none of them ever been here, even to catch the atmosphere, much less worked here. They cannot appreciate what they're up against. They're busy with matters of much greater immediate importance, while this is but a sort of an adventurous gamble at best.

"I am the more worried because Casenave told me today that both the Russian and Japanese Ministers have been to the Wai-Wu-Pu and have stated that if China made any loan with political significance (i. e., the Currency Loan) their governments wanted Russian and Japanese bankers to participate, and that if any foreign adviser was appointed Russia and Japan each wanted one also. The Chinese will never consent, if they can help it. It will mean either that

nothing at all is done, or else that to get an adviser at all we will have to carry all the Loan ourselves."

On January 18th Willard received a cablegram from the Group, insisting on the inclusion of a reference to the adviser in the agreement and refusing flatly to discuss any provision for Manchuria until an adviser had been actually appointed. This seemed to him unreasonable. "They don't know," he writes, "the politics of the situation and do not appreciate that in taking the responsibility of breaking negotiations by trying to impose obviously *unreasonable* conditions, we would have to bear the stigma of forcing China toward an international control, to avoid which she had originally opened negotiations with us. If China refused consent to *reasonable* conditions, on the other hand, she would have to suffer for her own folly, and we would be absolved." He felt so strongly about this personal responsibility that he had about decided to resign, but Mr. Calhoun persuaded him to submit the conditions to the Chinese and to make further representations to New York before proceeding to such an extreme measure. In the same letter there is an interesting and characteristic reference to his chief. "Don't think me disloyal to Davison or the others. I'm not. I'm sure he'd not be party to such a scheme if he understood it. But I despair of bringing him to a realization of the facts in letters, or even in personal interviews. People who are busy with other things and who haven't lived in a Peking atmosphere cannot see political subtleties of this sort. They're too open and frank and aboveboard. I'm glad they are."

January 20th, 1911. "The Duke absolutely refused to appoint an adviser under the conditions laid down in the Department's and the Group's telegrams. This I was sure he

would do. The conference was about to end with pious expressions of regret on the Duke's part, when Calhoun suggested that perhaps the adviser could be appointed under diplomatic notes and not mentioned in the Agreement at all. At this the Duke perked up and ended by referring Calhoun to Sheng, who, he rightly said, knew more about such matters. Dr. Chen then became very nervous, naturally, and so Sheng, whose chief desire in getting control of the negotiations is, I am sure, to eliminate the Doctor, won his point. He played it well. At least we're by one corner. The basis suggested by Washington and New York is now finished. Right. It was neither reasonable nor just to China. The next step is to try to bring our own people to reason, or else the game is up, or at any rate deadlocked for a long time, gone to join the Chin-Ai and Hukuang in cold storage.

"The plague has arrived and there is talk that the Legation Quarter will be isolated, and those of us who live outside will either have to go in or stay out. I'm choosing the latter course as one could do no work shut up behind the walls, and there's not much danger, if any, for those who lead healthy lives in clean surroundings. It's only the poor folk or the foolish ones, poor things, who get it."

January 29th, 1911. "I confess, abjectly, and with more blushes than you can picture, mantling me furrowed brow, that I am pretty darned well licked. I'm licked because (1) the Russians, but above all the Bandarlog, with all their subtle intrigue, bribery and misrepresentation are agin us, because (2) there's not one man in the Chinese government who is big enough, broad enough, wise enough and honest enough, to recognize either the plight his country is in or the need for getting and taking advice to help her out, and because (3) the American government and the American Group

can't deliver the goods, either politically or financially. If it weren't for (3) I'd take (1) and (2) with cheers. In fact, given any two of the three factors, without the other, there would seem to be some hope. But with all three, I

Sketch by Willard Straight of a dealer in curios

dunno. Perhaps we can still pull it out owing to the greed of the English, French and German bankers. That's our one hope. Through this we may secure the cooperation of the three Powers in squelching Japan and Russia. Without this cooperation we are well done, for the present anyway."

February 5th, 1911. "Today we've had a long walk, the Minister and I, and again I feel that I've scored. It's quite a long story. For some weeks past, as I've written you, I've been much concerned by the Manchurian situation. I felt

that the Japanese and Russians might take advantage of the plague scare to stir up a row which they could use as an excuse for grabbing the country. The Chinese have thought the same thing. Day before yesterday I got thinking about it all and it suddenly struck me that we might utilize the Chinese funk and put the loan through. I spoke to Mr. Calhoun and as usual at the first blush he was sceptical. Yesterday, however, I got hold of the Viceroy's representative and Sheng's Secretary and gave them the dope as follows (very business-like, this):

1. Situation in Manchuria serious, Japan and Russia may take some excuse to seize the country.

Admitted by Chinks with groans—

2. What to do. They didn't know.
3. You must call on America.

   Yes.
4. You know America won't fight?

   Ye—es.
5. You know America is disgusted owing to your failure to appoint an adviser and put through the loan.

   Ye—es.
6. If America won't fight you must then get in France, England and Germany, these being the Powers with America interested in preserving the integrity of China?

   Yes—yes.
7. You know that America is disgusted with you, because of the Currency and Hukuang delays and that E., F. and G. are also sore because of the Hukuang and because you don't want 'em in the Currency Loan?

   Yes.

8. Isn't the best thing for China to do then to settle these loans—the Hukuang, and admit the Tripartite to the Currency?

   Yes.

9. Do you realize that if you wait until Japan and Russia have done something in Manchuria that there will be unsettled conditions all through China and that no one will lend China money?

   Hadn't thought of that, but yes.

10.—Isn't the best thing then to put these things through now?

   Yes.

11. All right then. You must realize, first, that you've got to appoint an adviser and secondly, that you've got to act quickly in admitting the Tripartite banks."

The procedure which Willard Straight proposed for the purpose of making it easy for the Chinese government to accept an adviser and to admit the other banking Groups to equal participation in the Currency Loan, he explained in a letter of February 6th to Mr. Henry P. Davison: "There is no need to elaborate the arguments by which I hope to bring the Chinese around to the scheme I now have in mind. The scheme itself is as follows and I hope that before this reaches you we shall have been able to make something out of it.

"The Duke and Sheng to give us assurances, not written, as the whole thing must be very secret, that China will ask the United States to recommend *an* adviser.

"Straight to conduct the negotiation quietly and *unofficially* with Sheng. *Unofficially* in order to forestall any

attempt to cancel the preliminary agreement if we can't come to terms on the price, etc.

"When the time comes, you to ascertain from Grenfell what price the European Groups will accept, to advise me, and I to insert this price in the agreement, which will be drawn on the general lines of other agreements to which the Tripartite banks have been party.

"When I have reached an agreement with Sheng as to the loan agreement, the Duke to address the Minister asking that the United States recommend *an* adviser, whose functions, etc., shall be in accordance with the instructions from the Department. Calhoun to reply that the United States would do so. I to submit the draft loan agreement to Sheng, to advise the European Groups to instruct me to submit the loan agreement to them, and their principals to instruct them to sign. Some slight alterations might be necessary, but we ought to be able to put the whole thing through in three or four days after the Duke has written his note to Calhoun.

"The Peking Managers of the Tripartite to know nothing about the matter until they are told from home to sign. This secrecy is essential.

"Russia and Japan would be confronted by a fait accompli and would probably not dare risk the displeasure of the four Powers by attempting to block a loan in which all were interested. Nor would they probably endeavor even to secure a participation.

"No reference being made in the loan agreement to the appointment of an adviser, the Tripartite banks would probably not care whether he were an American or from Timbuctoo, as long as they made their flotation profits.

"Their governments, however, might feel differently and

unless all four governments were in accord Russia and Japan might make trouble. Hence our promise to recommend 'AN' adviser. With this commitment from China in its pocket our government could very graciously consult the other three as to who should be recommended. If we could get away with an American well and good. If not, make him a Swiss or a Dutchman, but whoever he is, have him approved by all four Powers before the American government recommends him. Thus they would all be committed to his support and all would stand together to keep Japan and Russia from butting in. Having promised to recommend 'AN' adviser only, we save our face if we can't pull off an American."

February 10th, 1911. "This morning a long telegram from New York and one for the Minister from Washington, giving us practically a free hand to go ahead on the lines laid down. If they'd done it six weeks ago they would have saved a deal of money and me much baldness. However, we're not kicking. The Department's telegram said: 'What grounds have you for believing Russia and Japan have intrigued against the Currency Loan? Sift these reports and report what explanations, if any, made by Russians and Japanese Ministers.' Good Heavens! Imagine going to Korostovetz and Honda and saying 'Prithee, gentle stranger, have you perchance done aught to interfere with our altruistic plan to reform China's currency?' 'Tush, tush,' they'd reply, slapping him on the wrist, 'Naughty, naughty, *how* could you have thought it!' Then thinking that we are starting off again, they'd have gone to the Chinese and threatened troops in Manchuria! The Department's fine. Do they think we are playing kindergarten games, I wonder, instead of gambling for an empire?

"Tonight I've been finishing a long letter to (Huntington) Wilson, setting forth my point of view, which he won't much like, but which he'd better have, as I shall fight him to the last ditch if the Department insists, as it seems inclined to, on the appointment of an American adviser, when such insistence may wreck the whole show and convict them of having sacrificed the broader interests of China and the future, perhaps, of American trade, i. e., currency reform, in an effort to get the small prestige of securing a job for an American, when Europe was putting up, or to put up rather, three quarters of the money."

February 15th, 1911. "I feel sometimes so sort of stretched that I almost think I'm going to snap like a guitar-string. Ideas seem to swirl around in my head and I work out schemes all night in my dreams, changing a word here, adding a paragraph there, furbishing and polishing a long, detailed agreement into such shape that it will be accepted both by the Chinese and New York and the State Department as well. I'll be glad when it's over, for sometimes I feel tired with the fight, fight, fight. But don't you worry about that, for I grit my teeth and pound the table and know I must win for your sake. I wonder if you'd like to hear your name hissed out in T. R.'s best style with an *I Will.*"

February 17th, 1911. "The day has had its excitements and voilà the way it came about. Started out with the Minister. Just before we reached the house he remarked that at the diplomatic meeting a few days ago Korostovetz had stated that the plague was spreading rapidly through Northern Manchuria, that the Chinese were doing nothing to cope with it, that Russia feared unless she took proper steps it might get into her Far Eastern provinces and thence through Siberia into Europe, that the Amur and

Angara (border streams) were frozen, that the Chinese were trooping across the ice, that Russia did not have enough troops to guard her frontier, and that the only alternative course would be for Russia to station troops in the principal Chinese centres in the north, whence the coolies could be prevented from going into Russian territory. He hoped that his colleagues, the other Ministers, would back him up in the demand which he intended to make at the Foreign Office, that China should permit Russia to take such steps as she saw fit—that her purpose was humanitarian and not at all political. When Calhoun told me this, I howled. Then I explained the lay of the land along these rivers. There was but one Chinese town worthy of the name and the country was practically a wilderness, save for the settlements on the Russian side. Korostovetz's stories about coolies crossing the ice were a pack of lies and his whole argument specious. Today Korostovetz went to the Wai-Wu-Pu and made his demand that China should permit the Russians to establish military 'posts of observation' in Chinese territory: This I learned later, and that he had said that he had the support of his colleagues! The Chinese naturally were scared to death. Just exactly what I feared all along has happened. Russia has made her move. Her irritation is merely an excuse for a policy of aggression. When I reached home I nearly cried. The blow had fallen and the one thing that could stave it off, the cooperation between the four Powers in the Currency Loan and in a settled Hukuang, remained unconsummated."

As a matter of fact the Russian demand on China instead of putting an end to the negotiation supplied Willard Straight with a powerful weapon which he could use in order to bring the Chinese to terms. The next day he wrote:

"It's been a day of fighting. In the morning I sent for Chen, the Viceroy's representative, and told him the blow had fallen. He hadn't heard of it. I hustled him off post haste to get to work on the Regent and Tsai Tao and the rest, to point out to them that China's only hope of getting foreign support in her present difficulties lay in bringing the four Powers together at once by closing the Hukuang and Currency Loans."

February 19th, 1911. "After I'd had a quick lunch and dictated some seven pages of telegrams I went to the Legation. He (the Minister) had a wire from the Department, which, with that tact that has so distinguished it, has now addressed England, France and Germany, stating that we have assurances for joint signature, if we can get a single adviser, and that in view of our efforts on behalf of the Tripartite Banks and our concessions in the Hukuang! ! ! the Department hoped that the Tripartite governments would consent to the recommendation of an American! Such finesse! When the mere mention of Hukuang is like a red rag to a bull to these European Foreign Offices! But for us the line would now be being built by them! Not that I think our going in was not right, nor that the methods were not justified, but we can hardly expect Europe to admit that we made any concessions."

On February 21st Willard was moved by the Department's notes to the other Powers to write the following paragraph in a letter to Mr. Davison:

"The Department's representations to the Tripartite Powers, telegraphed here and communicated to me by Mr. Calhoun, seemed most ill-conceived. Washington is apparently intent chiefly on securing the prestige of obtaining an American adviser. It seems unaware that the European gov-

ernments and banks are convinced that the Group is unable, owing to the limitations of the American market, itself to secure or alone to carry this responsibility; and that Europe, therefore, feeling that its admission to the loan is a necessity, cannot be expected to pay for our diplomatic plunge. 'Dollar' diplomacy made no friends in the Hukuang matter. In this case our methods were both successful and justifiable, for the Tripartite Powers were trying to exclude us from the enjoyment of our rights. But the neutralization and Chinchow-Aigun incidents showed the sawdust in the 'big stick.' I do not say the government is not justified in requesting Europe's acquiescence in the appointment of an American adviser. That is quite natural. I can, however, quite understand the Tripartite attitude, and sympathize therewith. As the French Minister stated: 'We want Currency Reform, but we feel that it is the first and most important step towards general administrative reform. We are willing to cooperate with the United States and the other Powers. We are willing that this Reform should have an international color, but, in view of our interests in China, we cannot be expected, if we can prevent it, to permit this measure to have anything like an exclusively American character, especially since we, in Europe, will bear most of the financial responsibility.' "

February 25th, 1911. "It's about 2 A. M. but I couldn't turn in without giving you the news. The Department has climbed down all along the line, consented to a neutral adviser and has authorized Calhoun to accept from the Chinese a note in the form which we know we can get. We've nothing to do now but to bring the Chinese to an early signature. It may be easy and it may be hard, but at any rate for the first time it is really up to us. We've a free

hand to get results on the lines that we have recommended."

March 2nd, 1911. "More pounding on the Currency Loan this morning. The Agreement has now passed through the bankers' mill and I'm much flattered, for they really had but very few alterations to suggest. Some they made were very good (there never was an agreement that couldn't be improved) and some were not so desirable. If it pleases 'em to change a word here and there, what difference does it make? They feel sot up; it hurts me not a bit and it probably improves the document. The Minister has promised to wire the adviser dope to the Department tomorrow. England has practically consented to a neutral adviser. France is still on the fence. It is all the more desirable that we have the matter put in the bankers' hands, because the French government shows a disposition to be a little wary of coming in with us, owing to its Russian entanglement. Allies must stick together, I suppose, and doubtless France is even more than ever anxious to conciliate Russia owing to the Russo-German understanding."

March 5th, 1911. "The Chinese sent in a note today to inform the Minister that they 'had verbally memorialized the Throne, and received the Imperial permission to engage a foreign financial adviser.' That's our first tangible step. I'm not altogether satisfied with the 'verbal memorial,' but I don't think they are trying to work any hanky-panky on us this time. Perhaps they are. If so, they'll get stung. The main thing is that at last they are committed. Unless they had practically determined to accept the Draft Loan Agreement now before them, they would not have taken this step."

March 9th, 1911. "Today we pulled the Currency Loan through, I think. Five hours with Sheng, Lord Li, Chen

(the Dr.) Chou, my friend from the Wai-Wu-Pu and a bumptious young person named Chang from the Board of Finance. Squabbling and haggling from eleven till four, with too many cigars and some nuts and crackers. But in the end, though we yielded some points, we won all the principles for which we'd been fighting, and we parted all very cheerful and pleased with ourselves. We've got our control and we've arranged it so that we can practically dictate the terms of China's currency reform. When you think of holding the whip hand in formulating the first real sound financial basis for a country of four hundred millions, it's quite a proposition. The bankers, whom I reached after five, having first gone to the Minister, were delighted, and I think very much surprised. I don't think they thought we could pull it off."

March 12th, 1911. "Thank you for saying that you don't blame me for cussing folk, but thank you more for reminding me that others are tired too, and should be borne with. I know I'm intolerant and hot-headed. When I see a way out of a difficulty I want to take it; but I can say in honesty that I want to do it in order to accomplish what I'm told to do, rather than to prove that I'm a wiser guy than the other fellow. . . . In self-defence, though, I don't believe we could have got half as much, such as it is, done, unless I had had the driving force that makes me so darned unpopular, and I am inclined, with all due humility and recognition of the error, to feel that I've managed to get along pretty well with the people with whom I work and do things, which is a fair test.

"Things go well, so well it frightens me a little, and makes me terribly anxious to get the thing through. Casenave came in this morning with the news that France would

The group of Chinese officials and Europeans and American negotiaters who shared in bringing the Currency Loan to a head

consent to the neutral adviser if he were nominated by the banks as suggested (mind you, by W. S.), and would accept the loan agreement as compromised with Sheng (by W. S.), and later that France had accepted the solution for the Hukuang (also suggested by W. S.). I must tell you, for I'm awfully pleased. I'm pleased frankly because they took my dope, but infinitely more so because the thing may perhaps go through now that we've found a way."

March 18th, 1911. "The week has been very full—meetings and all manner of things. We brought the bankers around to giving the Chinese the extra million pounds that Tenney wanted. Then, on Thursday, we learned that the Department had climbed on the band wagon and accepted the Hukuang solution. On Friday, Tenney saw the Chinese about our draft currency agreement, which they accepted in toto—practically—save the points that we had to refer home. Today word came that the Department had climbed down from another perch, and had consented to the nomination of the adviser by the banks."

March 26th, 1911. "We learned Sheng had that afternoon signed with the Japanese a loan for Yen 10,000,000, for 'General Railway Purposes,' i. e., to make up what some of these precious folk had stolen from the Yu Chuan Pu (Bd. of Communications). It's probable that Sheng did it as a sop, for the Japanese were demanding participation in both Hukuang and Currency Loans. But even so it's bad policy for China. The Japs will now run the Board. His action in floating this Japanese Loan and the whole official attitude here, make me feel that it is hopeless to try to do anything toward bolstering up China. If we get our place in the Hukuang and Currency, I think that for the future we want to sit very tight against the inevitable day when

China's finances will be administered like Egypt's—by an international board. Another dream shattered!"

Sunday, April 2nd, 1911. "Yesterday morning I thought that we should go into our final conference. We had a short meeting before going up to see Sheng and debated amongst ourselves as to whether or not we should initial the final agreement, or even sign. We were all confident. Five minutes after, when we reached Sheng's, the enemy was there. Sheng saw him before he came in to us. When we had our last conference on the 23rd, Odagiri was in another room with Sheng, settling the final details of his loan which was signed on the following day. The coincidence of Jyssoji's appearance yesterday made me very dubious about the result of our conference.

"Sure enough, when once the pretty pretties had been made, Sheng read a letter from Duke Tsai Tse, which in addition to refusing the 1% rebate, which we had demanded, brought up an entirely new point, and one which we had thought, after long discussion, had been settled. Our contract provides that we are to have six months in which to examine the Chinese program for currency reform. Then, if satisfactory, we'd issue the bonds: if not, the Chinese would repay all advances and our contracts would become null and void. Our scheme was, of course, to get the Chinese so far committed that they would have to accept the modifications in their reform scheme which we thought, after examination, to be essential to its successful inauguration and operation. The scheme (to me a layman) seems not so bad, but needs some important alterations. They twigged our game—that's all. They have no intention of doing more than making a pretence of currency reform, and have been using it as a good cloak under which

to make a loan. They know their scheme to be weak and are afraid that, if they sign the agreement now, we will hold them to effective currency reform. So they appeal to our cupidity. They say that they cannot sign a final agreement containing a 'conditional clause' and hope that we, in order to make our profit on the loan, will make a cursory examination of the program for currency reform and agree to issue the loan at once. As a banking proposition their attitude is sound enough. Buyers of bonds don't care whether the Chinese currency system is reformed or not. We could undoubtedly do as they wish and make a profit. Hillier and Cordes, I think, are inclined to do this. Casenave and I are not. We both feel (as does Mr. Calhoun and the Department and the Group), that we cannot regard this loan as a mere loan, but must look upon the preliminary agreement as an instrument which gives us a hold that should enable us to force China, even against the selfish, narrow-minded bigotry of these officials, to adopt a scheme which will really make currency reform effective. We would rather have the whole thing bust than stultify ourselves by accepting any sort of compromise."

April 4th, 1911. "It looked pretty black till late in the afternoon. I had a long session with Sheng on Thursday (two to nine-ten p. m.) after which there were still four points unsettled. I found a way around, but Hillier and Cordes kicked. Casenave, however, was steadfast. So yesterday I asked Mr. Calhoun to have Tenney write to Sheng saying that we'd call this afternoon. He told Tenney not to write till he heard how our morning conference came out. This morning when, after Hillier had to yield because Cordes and even his own assistant, a fellow named Brent, took Casenave's and my view, I found that no note had

gone to Sheng, I was pretty sick. Today was the day and I knew it. Tenney wrote after lunch and I waited and waited. Finally, just as I was dressing for dinner at the British Legation, Tenney came in. You should have seen

Willard Straight's Number One Boy in 1911

the fur fly! A rush note that I couldn't go to dinner (a nice thing to do at 7:20 p. m.) and off Tenney, Gatrell and I went to Sheng. We left at 10:20 with everything out of the way, save one point of £50,000 compensation to the banks, which Sheng said the Duke would have to agree to, but which he said he would recommend, which means we'll

get it. This is not in the agreement anyhow; and the agreement, thank the Lord, is now O. K.'d throughout. Yesterday, too, we thrashed out the Hukuang. Sheng had told the Ministers on Wednesday that we would have to give up the branch line as well as every other point in dispute! Consequently the Ministers were much discouraged. When we met him, however, he yielded practically everything else on condition we give up the branch line. My compromise was right after all. I was delighted. Tonight he said we must sign the Hukuang at once. It looks as if both would be finished before the end of the week! ! !"

Wednesday, April 12th, 1911. "Saturday has been fixed for signature. Na Tung and the President of the Wai-Wu-Pu were at the conference with old Sheng, the Duke, Chen Chin Tao and two Vice Presidents of the Board of Finance. Sheng played it beautifully. The only point at issue was the rebate of £50,000. That was put off till the last when all details regarding initialling and signing had been decided. Then they all tried to beat us down. Sheng knew perfectly well what we would say, but wanted to draw us out to show the Duke that we had made our last offer. Na Tung and the Duke made a game fight, but we were firm and finally after Na had done, Tsai Tse promised to refer the matter to the Regent in the morning, but said that in the meantime we'd better go ahead and get ready for signature—which means, I think, that we have won our point. So tomorrow Gatrell and I go up to check English and Chinese texts and Sheng has promised to initial. We have our final meeting for signature on Saturday afternoon, but it's still touching wood."

The signature did actually take place on Saturday the 15th. "The Loan was signed today," he writes on that date,

"without any further quibbling, and it's been quite funny to see the effect of the success on the others. Casenave is jubilant, Cordes much pleased and Hillier rather sour. Here we are. The Currency Loan is finished. Dollar diplomacy is justified at last. Knox and Wilson ought to be pleased, though I'm dead beat and nervous and captious."

He had brought to a successful conclusion the most exacting, difficult piece of work of his life, and he was entitled to more jubilation than his tired and divided mind was at that moment capable of feeling.

That the successful signature of the contract was due chiefly to the work of Willard Straight seems undoubtedly to be the case. The two men most familiar with the course of the negotiation, M. Casenave and Mr. Calhoun, both attribute the final success to his efforts. In a dispatch which the American Minister wrote for the use of his own government, narrating the course of the negotiation and the obstacles to its success, he describes Willard's services in the following words: "It is due to Mr. Straight to say that he exercised great tact both with the Chinese and with his colleagues. He has now the confidence and goodwill of both. During all their difficult negotiations, which were the most tortuous and nerve-racking with which I ever had anything to do, he showed the highest order of ability, and the success achieved is chiefly due thereto."

The significance which Willard himself attributed to the contract for the Currency Loan is indicated in the following quotation from a letter which he wrote to J. P. Morgan and Company on April 17th. "The significance of the Loan Agreement signed on Saturday will be better realized five years hence than it is today. It is the first tangible result of the new policy inaugurated by Secretary Knox

and Mr. Wilson and will, I feel sure, justify to the Group the wisdom of its venture in China. By virtue of this Loan Agreement supplementing, as it has, the agreement concluded in London on the 10th of November last, the American Group is now placed upon a footing of equality with the French, German and British interests, which have been entrenched here for the last 30 years. The position of the American Group as the first signatory to the agreement for the Currency Loan carries with it a heavy responsibility, for while the name of the United States in China has always been synonymous with fair dealing and honesty of purpose the representation of American finance, owing to the corruption and fraud of which the American-China Development Company was guilty, has been bad. The American Group is now, therefore, in a position to remove this stigma. More than that, owing to its primary place in the Currency Loan the American Group should be able to secure the leadership of the various financial interests associated under the London Agreement and with this leadership in your hands the American government should be able to make good its repeated declarations and to render to the Chinese government practical and much needed assistance in furthering administrative reform and in preserving China from the encroachments of those Powers who menace the integrity of this Empire."

But he paid a heavy price for his success. During these weeks he escaped a severe nervous collapse by only a narrow margin. The labor and the anxieties of his winter in Peking had strained to the utmost his moral and physical elasticity. It came very near to breaking. If he had not succeeded in concluding the negotiation or if anything had happened to destroy or damage his chance of mar-

rying Dorothy Whitney, it would surely have broken.

Throughout the entire winter he worked steadily and furiously; and his work was at once extremely varied and continuously exacting. He had, of course, a regular and trying correspondence to sustain with his principals in New York. He drew up special memoranda upon various articles of the proposed contract. He drafted new provisions or revisions of old provisions in order to meet the difficulties which came up during the course of the negotiation. He had to keep constantly on the alert to prevent the ill-informed, selfish or discordant parties to the proposed contract from falling out. At one moment he would be hastening to the Foreign Office in order to smooth Chinese susceptibilities or to persuade or scare their negotiators into withdrawing an impossible condition. At the next he would be closeted with the American Minister and consulting with him how to circumvent what they took to be the impossibility of the Department of State's demands. A little later he would have an interview with Mr. Cordes or Mr. Hillier for the purpose of satisfying some scruple of theirs or of their governments'. He was always at the centre of the transaction, always overcoming obstacles, contriving expedients and insisting on solutions. He was the party to the negotiation who kept the distracted negotiators together and refused to be diverted by partial interests or to be discouraged by opposition or to be paralyzed by difficulties. The work called for the incessant exercise of all the muscles of his will and intelligence.

It was not, however, the variety, the exigency and the incessancy of his labors which nearly broke Willard's spirit. He could, when he was running free, carry almost any amount of work with impunity. But during this winter in

Peking the mind which was so continually and so laboriously occupied was never emancipated from an insidious and an intolerable anxiety. The obstacles to success were so formidable that throughout most of the winter it looked extremely doubtful whether he would close the contract. Yet the consequences of failure, as he saw them, were insufferable. If he returned to New York a beaten man, he would not only have compromised a flourishing chance of a successful career, but he might, as he feared, diminish the chance of marrying the woman he loved. He was still a young, a poor and an obscure man. She belonged to a wealthy and established family. Success would mean an increase of self-confidence and reputation; it might, he hoped, help to overcome some of the obstacles to his marriage, but success seemed remote and precarious and to his over-strained spirit the consequences of failure loomed large and utterly disastrous.

So far as Dorothy Whitney was concerned, all this emotional distress was an unnecessary waste. She had finally decided to marry him and the success or failure of the Currency Loan, it is scarcely necessary to add, would not have made the slightest difference. But while it made no difference to her in her relation to him, it made an immense difference to him in his relation to himself. If he had failed in Peking, he would have felt himself somehow far less worthy of the woman he loved. His was an intense spirit and its different major expressions interpenetrated. He could not become so desperately desirous both of deserving to marry a woman and succeeding in a piece of work without creating in his mind a dependence between the two desires. His inability to divorce the success of his work from the success of his suit and the consequent fear of a continuation of his lone-

Willard Straight and Dr. Gatrell

liness caused him a great deal of unnecessary distress and anguish, but the same dependence supplied him with the energy of purpose to pull himself through a scarred but still a whole man. His success in this most difficult and gallant achievement of his life was born of the self-increase and enhancement which his love for his future wife and his craving for her approval helped him to summon from the depths of his nature. Willard Straight, like many other men of unusual initiative and daring, was something of a knight-errant, who fought his enemies with the name of his lady on his lips, and nailed her banner to the flagpoles of his conquered lands. Willard Straight told the truth when he wrote to Dorothy Whitney on the day of his victory: "If only you had been here to celebrate! But you were, for it was the courage you gave me and my hope for you which alone carried me through."

On the day when he wrote the words I have just quoted, Willard Straight hoped and expected that he would be free in another week to return to the woman who, he had reason to believe, was now willing to marry him. But his own

eagerness rather than the demands of his work prompted his expectations. The agreement with respect to the Hukuang Railways which had hung fire throughout the entire winter still remained to be closed, and the signature of the contract for the Currency Loan involved diplomatic consequences, particularly in relation to Russia and Japan, which required further attention. This supplementary work occupied him for six weeks instead of, as he hoped, for only a few days. He fretted and fumed at the delay, for, irritated and exhausted as he was in mind and spirit, he was still obliged to exhibit the utmost patience and forbearance and conform to the ritual of procrastination without which no diplomatic business can be transacted in China.

By May 20th, however, an agreement between the Four Power Group and the Chinese government with respect to the Hukuang Railways was finally signed and on May 25th he started for Europe. If he had not been able to leave about this time, his exhausted nerves would not have lasted much longer. Although he had intended to do a great deal of work on the train, he was so tired that he slept for a large part of the day as well as the night throughout the entire journey. Two weeks in a sleeping car would not serve the purpose of a rest cure for the great majority of nervously exhausted people, but they did for Willard Straight. He was prodigiously refreshed by the relaxation from the strain and by the prospect of a reunion with the woman he loved. He reached London on June 8th, a much restored man.

At that particular moment he had some reason to congratulate himself on his prospects and achievements. To an extent which comes to very few men, he had during a comparatively brief interval seen his anticipations verified

and his projects realized. When he arrived in Mukden as Consul General at the end of November, 1906, he hoped to do something for the protection of China against exploitation by Japan; and he proposed vaguely to save China from the fate of Korea by inducing American capital and the American government to take an interest in Chinese economic development. He had no equipment for the task except his position as Consul, the friendship and confidence of one enterprising American financier and his own energy, initiative and ability. But this equipment had proved sufficient. He was, of course, lucky in certain respects. The President who was elected in 1908 happened to be peculiarly interested in China; and the interest was bound, in so far as it was intelligent and aggressive, to take the form of actual participation by American capital and the American government in the economic development of that country. The competition among European governments and bankers for concessions in China had become so acute that they needed and in the end welcomed the mediating influence of an American partner. But lucky or not, events during these five years had worked steadily in the direction which he anticipated and desired, and he himself had done more than any other single man to get them started and to mold them. He was still a young man with the prospect of many years of life and work ahead of him, but he had already vindicated to a remarkable degree his judgment, his vision and his ability to find a place for his projects in the actual world.

CHAPTER XIII

NEGOTIATING WITH A REVOLUTION

WILLARD STRAIGHT spent the summer of 1911 partly in conferring with his chiefs and their associates about the Currency and the Hukuang Loans and partly in preparations for his approaching marriage. When he arrived in London Mr. Henry P. Davison was waiting for him, and they passed a week in consultation chiefly with other members of the American group. On June 14th they sailed for New York which they reached on the 21st. "Dorothy came in to town to meet me," he writes to a friend of both of them, "and I stayed in the country most of the time, going to Oswego to see my aunt and sister and doing two days in the office—two days which I still remember as a sort of blur with faces peering at me over the table and my own voice in reply to questions sounding as if it came from a person some miles off. Dorothy, with Beatrice and Mrs. Bend, was sailing on the 28th, just a week after I landed. There was only one thing to do, which was to sail too, and this, thanks to Davison, I did. He very properly remarked that he might as well let me go, as I'd be of no use if I stayed."

Late in July an important conference took place in London, for the purpose of making arrangements for the future issue of the Currency Loan. It was attended by Hillier, Cordes and other representatives of the French, British and German groups with whom Willard Straight had already negotiated in Peking. After it was over he wrote to his

Sketches made in Brittany during the summer of 1911

chief, Mr. Davison, expressing himself as extremely well satisfied with what the gathering had accomplished. It looked to him as if the Four Power Group was successfully working together and as if the Chinese government, at least in the person of Chen Chin Tao, the Chinese representative at the conference, was loyally cooperating with it. The rest of the summer was passed in the company of his future wife, Dorothy Whitney, in England, Normandy and Switzerland. They were married in Geneva on September 7th at 9:45 in the morning. There were present, Harry and Payne Whitney, Mrs. George Bend, Beatrice Bend, William Phillips and Edwin Morgan. A church ceremony followed at 12:30, and after a wedding breakfast at which a few more

people were present, Willard and Dorothy Straight left for Lausanne en route for Italy. But Italy did not detain them long. The business of the Group in China demanded his early return to that country and by October 11th they had reached Peking via the Trans-Siberian route.

He returned to Peking primarily for the purpose of removing the final obstacles to the issue of the Currency Loan, and, if nothing had happened to disturb the authority of the Chinese government, the loan would almost certainly have been successfully and profitably issued. A few days after his arrival, he had an entirely satisfactory interview with the Duke Tsai Tse, who accepted the recommendations with respect to the issue of the loan upon which Willard's chief had instructed him to insist. The latter, in cooperation with Lord ffrench, was sufficiently encouraged by the favorable outlook to start one more demonstration on

Sketch made in Brittany during the summer of 1911

behalf of his first and dearest plan—the Manchurian-Mongolian Railway—when he ran into an unforeseen and formidable obstacle. It was a convulsion which entirely changed not only the conditions under which foreign capital would finance the future development of China but also the features and the expression of the Chinese political landscape.

On the day after they arrived in Peking, Dorothy Straight wrote to her friend, Beatrice Bend: "All Peking is in a wild state of excitement now over the Revolution in Hankow. The revolt is directed entirely against the Manchus, and so far the revolutionists have carried everything their own way, have kept order and have issued sane and sensible edicts. The diplomats here in Peking are scared to death. People are coming in all day to see Willard and tell him that the Revolution will spread, that there will be another Boxer row and that the dynasty will be overthrown. Yesterday, Dr. Morrison, the famous correspondent of the London Times, rode up and down the Legation street saying that the end of the Manchu dynasty was at hand. Everyone generally is in a blue funk. Willard thinks that it is all nonsense and that so far there has not been enough trouble to warrant all this terrible fright in Peking."

Willard Straight was right in believing that the disorder did not at that time compromise the safety of the foreigners in Peking, but the importance of the Revolution itself could scarcely be exaggerated. It turned out to be one of the most disconcerting events of modern history which profoundly modified the life and outlook of the peoples of Eastern Asia. It had long been brewing. The Manchu government and ruling class had failed utterly and in every respect to control and subdue the clash between the old and tough but stagnant civilization of China and the pushing, mobile and

inquisitive civilization of Europe and America. During the past thirty years the Chinese people had suffered a steady series of reverses which had deprived them of spacious territories, of large resources in material and money, of prestige in the eyes of others and of confidence in themselves. It was manifestly intolerable for self-respecting Chinese to allow this process of partition, exploitation and disparagement to continue. Yet how could they put up an effective resistance as long as political power remained in the hands of the corrupt and effete Manchu bureaucracy? There was, indeed, a faction in the Manchu government which had moved in the direction of a kind of reform; and if it had begun sooner and kept more steadily in power, this group might have saved the Manchu leadership and avoided a revolution; but I doubt whether it would. A society as tenaciously conservative as that of China, is moved, in spite of its sense of the need of change, to resist any process of orderly reformation which is intended and intelligently calculated to forestall the necessity of a disorderly upheaval. Revolutions possess an indispensable function in the political economy of the East. It is wholly improbable that the transformation of economic conditions and cultural forms which contact with the aggressive civilization of the West was bound to produce in China, could have taken place without involving a political and social convulsion.

This is not the place in which to tell the story, even in a very cursory way, of the genesis and the course of the Revolution in China. But in order to explain what happened to the plans which brought Willard Straight to China, it will be necessary to trace the connection between the events, the decisions and the negotiations with which he was asso-

ciated in Peking and the progress of the revolt in Southern China. The Revolution was from its start not unconnected with the concessions and the projects of the Four Power Group. The initial insurrection was due to the violent dissatisfaction of the local gentry in the province of Szechuan at the appropriation by the Imperial government of the Szechuan Railway; and this error of the government was an indirect result of the concession to the Four Power Group of the Hukuang Railways which Willard Straight and the agents of the other Groups had finally negotiated late in the previous May.

The contract for the Hukuang Railways provided for the construction of a line which was to connect Hankow with Kueichou-Fu just inside the eastern boundary of Szechuan. But the government had reserved the building of the railway within the province to the enterprise of its own people who had asked for this privilege and had organized a company to perform the work. The company, however, had done little building. Its president had misappropriated a large part of its funds and the Imperial government decided to condemn the franchise and to nationalize the railway. The matter had already been brought to the attention of the Four Power Group, the members of which had agreed, in case they should be asked for an additional loan for the construction of the Szechuan Railway, as to the rule which should govern its distribution among themselves.

The government offered the Szechuan Company shares in the nationalized line to the amount of its remaining capi-

tal and promised to pay for the earth work already completed. The company demanded shares to the full amount of the capital originally subscribed. It claimed that, as the President, who had misappropriated several millions, was an appointee of the Imperial government, the latter should bear the loss. When the government refused this relief, many meetings to express popular indignation were held in various cities of Szechuan which protested vigorously to the Prince Regent at Peking.

But before the agitation had reached this point the local gentry formed a league in the summer of 1911 which demanded the cancellation of the whole contract with the Four Power Group. The provincial legislature supported the demand and the Viceroy of Szechuan arrested its president. His friends gathered a crowd and proceeded to the Viceroy's yamen to demand his release. The soldiers on guard fired into the crowd and killed a number of persons. Day by day the feeling grew more bitter. Revolutionary conspirators seized the opportunity to advocate the overthrow of the Manchu government and found a sympathetic hearing. The movement spread rapidly in September and when Li-Yuan-Hung on the 10th of October led his troops at Wuchang in a mutinous rising, the insurrection had become a formidable reality.

The coming of the Revolution raised a series of doubtful and intrinsically very difficult questions for the leaders of the Four Power Group to answer. In its relation to the

Chinese government the Group occupied a much more responsible position than bankers usually do to an impecunious state. Its members were acting as the agents of their own governments or in cooperation therewith. For this reason as well as for the reason that the Chinese government would find it extremely difficult to obtain a sufficient loan from any other source, the Group had to consider the probable political as well as the economic consequences of a loan. But in politics its own interests were not those of the Chinese people. Its ability to transact business in China depended on the existence of a government which was capable of making itself respected. The Revolution challenged the authority of the existing government; and no one could tell whether, if the Manchus were driven out, it would be possible for the revolutionists to set up an efficient substitute. The interests of the Group, consequently, tended to coincide with those of the Manchus, provided the Empire had any chance of surviving, and according to the Imperialists the Empire would survive if it could borrow enough money to pay its troops. On the other hand, the Revolution was, as revolutions go, well intentioned and well behaved. It was rather anti-Manchu than anti-foreign. Its leaders were not Chinese reactionaries. They were reformers who were more or less influenced by Western culture. Their program of reform included many administrative improvements which all foreign friends of China had long and ardently desired.

In the beginning Willard Straight and M. Casenave, who during the temporary absence of Messrs. Hillier and Cordes were managing the affairs of the Group in Peking, underestimated the strength of the Revolution and overestimated the staying power of the Manchus. They believed that if

the Manchu dynasty called to its assistance a strong man and consented to a few constitutional reforms, the rebellion would lose its momentum and would soon be crushed. "In the early days," says M. Casenave, "it seemed as if the revolt which was taking place in the South and in the Yangtze Valley might easily be overcome. It did not apparently differ from other movements of the same kind which had not seriously shaken the dynasty. It was certainly not as menacing to the Europeans as the Boxer trouble had been in 1900. Willard Straight and I believed that if the Regent took appropriate measures, if he entrusted the power to a strong statesman, the Manchu dynasty was in no way lost. We thought also that we had nothing to gain from

the Revolution. For some months the negotiations that we had to carry on had been placed in the hands of relatively capable Mandarins, like Tsai Tao and Sheng Kung Pao. They had succeeded, and it seemed as if the Manchus were definitely started on the road to reform. We were firmly convinced that the country was not ripe for a republic which would lead only to anarchy; and we believed that under these conditions if the Manchus would decide to entrust the government to a good Prime Minister, their maintenance was still the best solution possible." Both of them were in the beginning willing to recommend the lending of money to the Manchu government provided it agreed to confide effective power to a man like Yuan-Shi-Kai.

A letter from Willard Straight to Mr. Davison dated October 28th, confirms this version of his attitude towards the Revolution during its early stages. "The apple cart," he writes, "received a blow in the solar plexus on the morning we reached Peking when the rebels took off the lid at Wuchang. I must confess that at the outset I did not take the thing seriously, and, in fact, to be honest, I feel myself much up a gum tree when it comes to prophesying at the present time. The row, however, seems not so much anti-dynastic as I had feared, but directed rather to securing those reforms which all friends of China desire, and which the Manchus have not inaugurated as quickly as the Young China party has wished. It looks a good deal as if our friend Yuan, who has today been made Commander-in-Chief, had been doing a little dickering on his own account with the patriots, and the feeling is general and I think justified, that if the government gives him the powers he demands, i. e., the right to reorganize the Cabinet and create a responsible government, the Revolution in the

South will fizzle, and the leaders thereof, having made terms which will save their precious necks, will mount the Band Wagon, very near the driver." This prophecy, too, miscalculated the relative strengths of the contending forces. It was not the Revolution but the Manchus which

Willard and Dorothy Straight soon after their marriage

fizzled out. Straight and Casenave were right in anticipating a period of practical anarchy, assuming that Revolution triumphed, but they were wrong in believing that the Manchu dynasty and its Chinese supporters were capable of maintaining a centre of national authority to which intelligent and public spirited Chinese could rally.

The events of the next few weeks proved that the moral persistence was all on the side of the revolutionists.

Dorothy Straight, writing from Peking on October 22nd, says, "The strange part of it is that many of the foreigners themselves are entirely in sympathy with the rebels and all the high officials, who are Chinese, are also secretly favorable to this anti-Manchu revolt."

A few days later there seemed to be for the first time some reason to be alarmed for the safety of the foreigners in Peking. Unmistakable signs of disaffection were observable among the troops of the regular army. The Prince Regent in alarm granted the nineteen constitutional articles and called Yuan-Shi-Kai to his assistance. The Manchus were running away from Peking with as much consternation as the French emigrés had shown in deserting Paris. Well-informed observers expected a rising in the Chinese city against the Manchus. Such a rising might have been a serious matter for Dorothy and Willard Straight. Their house was situated in the Chinese quarter and was exposed to attack by rioters. "During dinner on the 29th," she writes, "a soldier arrived from the Legation with a letter to Willard from Major Russell, sending him two army revolvers—deadly looking weapons. We are really beginning to feel rather business-like, for W. is going to sleep with a loaded revolver by his bed; and I have another, unloaded, by me. It would be rather exciting to be attacked by a wild mob in the night."

A few days later she adds to the same friend, "Another day during which the revolutionary rumors have thickened. The Chinese and the Manchus are leaving the city by the thousands. The streets are filled by trucks overladen with boxes, cases and luggage of all descriptions—bound for the Legation quarter, there to be safeguarded. The rebellious troops which have been quartered at Lanchow have moved

up to Fung-tai which is only about ten miles from here. There has been a general panic since the promulgation of this news. No one knows, of course, what the further movement of these troops will be, but the already frightened population jumps to the conclusion that they will march to Peking." And on November 8th, "The nervous tension is still the same and everybody is expecting a crisis. Soon there will be no Manchu officials and nobles left in Peking. Half the members of the National Assembly have run away, the president of the Chinese bank has departed and the various boards are left leaderless. . . . There was a meeting this morning of all the commanders of the Legation guards. They decided to unite all their forces and not spread their soldiers over the city to protect the various foreigners and missionaries living outside the quarter. The Russians have only seventeen soldiers here which shows up their policy in a very clear light. They are hoping that riots and conflagrations will occur, perhaps even the destruction of foreign lives and property—thereby justifying intervention by the Powers and affording Russia her long sought opportunity of quietly taking over Mongolia. Willard and I had an interesting talk the other day with Korostovetz, the Russian Minister. He came out quite openly with a statement of his policy, admitting that his only idea was to keep China weak and oppose always the establishment of a strong government."

On November 13th, Yuan-Shi-Kai entered Peking and brought with him a sufficient number of trained and loyal soldiers to guarantee for the near future the preservation of order. He had come at the invitation of the Prince Regent to save the dynasty. He lost no time in opening up negotiations with the Group for a loan. He wanted, according to

a letter by Dorothy Straight of November 17th, a large loan for general reorganization purposes. "The Chinese are so hard pressed for money that they will offer almost any terms —terms which the bankers would not think of demanding. Yuan came to Willard with his proposal, but Willard has asked him to give the English the lead, for the Americans wish to keep in the background just now and not fan the fire of jealousy with which the other foreign Powers regard every act of the United States in the Far East. By turning this business over to the English it means that the American Group shares equally, but the weight of the negotiations does not fall upon it." The statement in this letter that Yuan wished to borrow money for reorganization purposes describes rather the excuse for the loan than its immediate object. Yuan's primary purpose was to keep a government in operation which could assert its authority. Eventually he proposed to reorganize, but the time for reorganization had yet to come. How much of the old political structure and traditions could survive still remained doubtful. They did not know whether the revolutionists might not be weak and half-hearted and could not be induced to accept a constitutional monarchy, whether they were not essentially disorderly and would not by their behavior necessitate and justify a military dictatorship or whether they were not strong enough to insist on and operate a republic. Yuan needed a large sum of money chiefly for the purpose of enabling himself to influence the decision in favor of one of these alternatives. By means of the money he could pay and equip a victorious army and probably establish the kind of government which seemed most suitable to him.

Both Straight and Casenave were strongly in favor of advancing money to Yuan. A reformed constitutional mon-

archy with a strong man as Premier and semi-dictator might in their opinion combine progress with order and would constitute the best political issue of the revolutionary convulsion. But their British and German colleagues did not agree with them and neither did their principals in America and Europe. They were not allowed to give to Yuan the support which he needed in order to act vigorously and effectively. Willard subsequently attributed Yuan's inability to keep the monarchy alive as the symbol of law and order to this refusal of the bankers to go to Yuan's assistance. He may have had sufficient reason for this belief, but as I look over the sequence of events it appears to me improbable. The Revolution was stronger than he assumed and the dynasty weaker; but even if the money would have served to defeat the Revolution and perpetuate the Monarchy, it was extremely undesirable for the government of China to derive its indispensable means of subsistence from foreign capital.

His understanding of the good which might be accomplished by an immediately efficient reform government betrayed Straight into a lack of patient consideration for the point of view of the Chinese progressives. The latter, like most people who make revolutions and in spite of their ultimately constructive program, were temporarily a destructive force. They blew up the dynasty at a moment when it was trying with some sincerity and intelligence to reform itself. Revolutions are always costly and sometimes unnecessary; but the reorganization of their state was a business which the Chinese were entitled to undertake in their own way. The correct course for the bankers to pursue was to refuse to interfere until the Chinese themselves established a government whose apparent stability and

popularity qualified it for recognition and assistance. This was the policy upon which the most influential Englishmen in Peking insisted, and under their influence it finally prevailed. It called itself a policy of neutrality, but it was neutral in method rather than purpose. Dr. Morrison and Sir John Jordan the British Minister both welcomed the fall of the dynasty in the interest of the welfare of China and they were unwilling to interfere on its behalf. Notwithstanding the years of chaos which have actually followed its fall, the majority of disinterested students of Chinese history would now agree with them.

But the immediate result was disastrous for Yuan. Dorothy Straight writes on November 21st, "The political situation is growing denser instead of clearing up. Yuan is

ostensibly loyal to the Manchus; yet his sympathies are entirely with the rebels. The latter will not even talk over any terms of peace with Yuan until he promises to rid them of the hated Manchus. Poor Yuan has tried in vain to persuade the Prince Regent to abdicate. It looks as if the fighting would continue and the last state of this country shall be worse than the first." Yet two weeks later the Prince Regent did propose to resign in favor of two co-Regents, one of whom was a Chinese, Hsu-Shih-Chang, Willard Straight's former associate in Manchuria. It was the first time during three hundred years that a Chinese had sat so near the throne; but the concession did not placate the revolutionists and was never seriously carried out.

They still demanded a republic, and as Yuan was not rich and strong enough to fight he was obliged to negotiate. Early in December he dispatched Tang-Shao-Yi, who had undertaken the abortive journey to Washington in the fall of 1908, to Shanghai and commissioned him to talk over with the rebels possible terms of peace. There followed a few weeks of comparative quiet, while the negotiations were taking place; but towards the end of the month it became clear that if peace was to supervene, it must be peace with victory for the revolution and the republic. At the time Willard Straight was inclined to believe that Tang-Shao-Yi in submitting to the republic had betrayed Yuan, but there is much to be said for Tang's good faith. Whatever his motives in yielding the essential point may have been, the whole course of the Revolution up to that moment argued irresistibly in favor of its termination in a republic rather than in a bastard monarchy. The revolutionists were victorious all along the line. They did not, it is true, occupy a strong military position. If Yuan could have borrowed

$50,000,000, he could possibly have beaten them with a mercenary army. But as it was they had succeeded in overcoming the Manchu armies, and being victorious they had no reason for consenting to a compromise. A constitutional monarchy was a European political expedient with no roots in Chinese traditions and with no important Chinese conviction in its favor. It derived its strength from the desire of the foreigners in Peking and their Chinese associates to create a political agency which would reform China from above and without a necessarily costly consultation with the Chinese people. The real alternative to a republic or something which was called a republic was a military dictatorship. If Yuan had obtained his loan, he would doubtless have set himself up as dictator. In any event the Manchus were down and out. They were bound to go, no matter whom Yuan had entrusted with the negotiations at Shanghai.

The foreigners in Peking, who were deeply interested in developing Chinese material resources, were justified in dreading the probable alternatives to a constitutional monarchy. At best it committed them to a long voyage in troubled and treacherous waters. It might even involve an abandonment or an indefinite postponement of the plans to which they had devoted their energy and money. But they were really helpless to prevent it. The Revolution was a momentous affair. It embodied an attempt on the part of the progressive Chinese to recover possession of their own house. The revolutionists accepted the future dependence of China on Western capital, technology and science, but they demanded time to adapt the traditional Chinese culture, institutions and national conscience to the appropriation of these great gifts. The Manchus could not place themselves at the head of a political reorganization which

was capable of summoning to its assistance a reinvigorated Chinese culture. They might have carried on an ineffective guerilla warfare against the increase of European and American influence in China or they might have acted as its mercenary accomplices; but they were impotent to awaken the Chinese people to the need of a workable adjustment between Western science and Chinese traditions. Very few foreigners in Peking understood at the time the real significance of the Revolution. They saw chiefly its immediate inconveniences, its trivial, cheap and sinister aspects and the threat of indefinite future chaos.

Whether they liked it or not, the Revolution finally established a helpless and politically squalid régime which was called a Republic. On December 29th, Yuan published the edict which ordered the election of a national assembly to decide whether China should be named a Republic or a Constitutional Monarchy. In the meantime Yuan was maintaining his own position only with difficulty. On December 28th Dorothy Straight wrote, "Dr. Tenney reported the result of his interview with Yuan. There was nothing new—only the same discouraging story of failing funds. Last month his soldiers were given only half pay. He has now only sufficient money to carry on the government for two weeks longer. Unless he obtains a loan he cannot guarantee peace in Northern China, which may mean pillage and riot, occasioned by the angry cry of his injured soldiers. Dr. Tenney was shocked by Yuan's changed appearance. His hair has turned white in a few weeks, and his face wears the hunted look of a man who is facing failure." A few days later Yuan took possession of some 6,000,000 taels which formed part of the dynastic reserve of the monarchy; and this sum enabled him to hold on in spite

of the fact that the Four Power Group continued obdurate to his appeal for financial backing.

On January 10th, Dorothy Straight wrote to the same friend, "Today the news of Russia's coup has fallen like a bomb-shell into Peking. Last Sunday the Russian Chargé presented a note to the Chinese Foreign Office, demanding that Mongolia be declared independent under the suzerainty of Russia. Now the question is: What will Japan do? The partition of China has begun. None of the foreign Powers will be willing to make any attempt to uphold her integrity." The partition of China had not begun, although there was sufficient reason for observers on the spot to anticipate and dread its beginning; but the Chinese Revolution and the strain of maintaining the precarious balance of power in Europe were making it most difficult to keep the Four Power Group intact as an instrument of the purpose for which it had originally been organized. The Revolution offered an opportunity for Russia and Japan to play their traditional policy in China to the limit and to use the weakness of that country as an excuse for aggrandizement at her expense. The Four Power Group whose policy it was to develop China as a political and economic entity formed an obstacle to their plans; and throughout the winter the Russian and Japanese governments were intriguing to destroy it. The gathering European political crisis assisted them in conducting this intrigue. The Russian government was constantly asking the question in Paris why French finance in Peking was cooperating with German and American finance rather than with Russia; and considering the increasing German pressure in Europe the question was an embarrassing one to answer. The position of Great Britain was more involved than that of France. She was the ally

of Japan in the East and the associate of Russia in European politics. At that very moment Sir Edward Grey was considering favorably Isvolsky's offer of a more intimate political cooperation between their two countries.

In a letter written about this time to Mr. Henry P. Davison, Willard sets forth the obstacles which these European political complications created for the success of his work in Peking. He writes late in December, "Though personally I have wished that the Americans or the Americans and Germans might go ahead irrespective of our wobbling British friends, I have appreciated your position at home and your desire to stick together. My principal kick has been that the British Minister here has, it seems to me, been too much influenced by the representations of Shanghai, and has failed to see the disastrous consequences of a failure to support the only organized government. At the same time I can appreciate the reasons for this reluctance to take sides. The British have held and do hold the key to the position, and whatever my personal feelings may be, there is no question in my mind that we must play with them even though their inaction is annoying.

"Although the Japanese are now attacking Germany and are leaving us alone for the time being, the Russians are still damning us. They claim that our entry into the China field has been responsible for the present disorders. They assert that we still cherish the idea of neutralizing Manchuria, that the Currency Loan is but the old idea in a new form. Isvolsky at Paris, the officials in Petersburg, the people here, are endeavoring to play on French and Japanese susceptibilities, to create suspicion of our good faith and the honesty of our intentions. . . . They bombard the French government and the banks with insinuations regard-

ing American policy. It looks to me as if a serious attempt was being made to break up the quadruple combination which is not looked on with favor by either Russia or Japan.

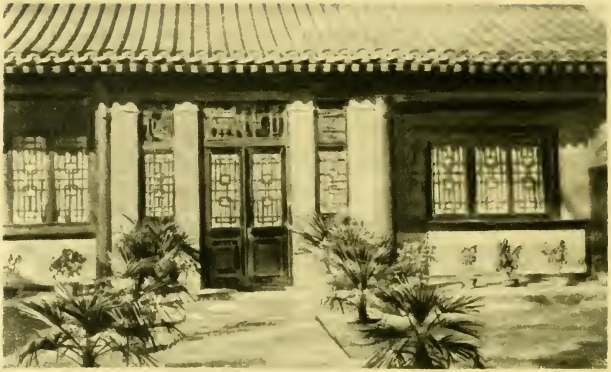
"The London Agreement has but little longer to run, and one of these fine days we may find the French standing from under. Casenave is heartbroken, but can do nothing. The situation would not be so serious were it not for the fact that, judging from Sir Edward Grey's recent speech, England as well as France regards Russian friendship as all important in view of the growing menace of Germany. Great Britain is letting Russia play horse in Persia, and I doubt if we can find much British support against either Russian or Japanese aggression in China.

"It would be a grave mistake, as I see it, for us to initiate any more business for a long time. We must leave this to England, relying on her either to square or to admit her pirate brethren. In this way we can escape the odium of letting the Russians and Japanese into the combination, which otherwise might injure our own position with the Chinese."

As a matter of fact the English government had, in view of all circumstances, behaved, not merely selfishly but with an enlightened consideration for the future welfare of China. Had it not been for the British Foreign Office the Russian attack on Mongolia might have set the pace and started another race for Chinese territorial annexation. If this result did not follow, it was chiefly for two reasons. The revolutionists by promising scrupulously to respect all the contracts which the Manchus had entered into with foreign governments and nationals left little legal excuse for intervention; and the English government really acted as a drag upon the aggressive and mischief-making propensities

of its Japanese ally. Willard's diary affords an intimation of the firm and wise policy which Sir Edward Grey was pursuing. An American newspaper correspondent had published a report that Great Britain with Japan's support was using its influence in favor of a monarchical government for China. Dr. Morrison explained to Willard that the report was erroneous, but he indicated how the error might have originated. "Sir John Jordan, the British Minister, and Ijuin, the Japanese Minister, acted under explicit instructions from their chiefs to cooperate. They both separately so informed Yuan. Ijuin, however, without telling Jordan, advised Yuan that Japan would never recognize a republic and would interfere with force, if necessary, to prevent its establishment. In view of what both Jordan and Ijuin had said about cooperation Yuan took this as meaning that Great Britain agreed with this attitude. He therefore wired Tang (who was negotiating in Shanghai) that Japan and another Power would not consent to a republic. Tang told Morrison (then also in Shanghai) that England and Japan would not consent. Morrison wired to the Times and the Foreign Office wired Sir John Jordan, asking for an explanation. Sir John ran it down. He informed Yuan that Great Britain had done her best to bring the contending factions together but cared not a damn whether there was a republic or a monarchy. This was sent to Tokyo. Jordan asked Ijuin to correct his statement made to Yuan. Ijuin had to get instructions. They came. On Wednesday Ijuin also said that Japan would be neutral."

On January 17th there was an attempt to assassinate Yuan-Shi-Kai with a bomb, which occurred in the immediate vicinity of the Straight residence. "Willard and I," writes Dorothy Straight, "were practically on the scene



The house in Peking occupied by Willard and Dorothy Straight in 1911-12

at the time, so we know the details more accurately perhaps than the newspapermen. Every day that Yuan goes to the Palace, he passes through our street. At this time the streets are lined with soldiers; and he is accompanied by a bodyguard of forty or fifty men. Yesterday morning when he was returning from the Palace a bomb was hurled at him from the second story window of a shop which was only one hundred yards from our house.

"Willard and Mr. Chambers, his secretary, rushed out into the street and I quickly prepared to follow them. By the time I got out the street was filled with soldiers but cleared of all traffic and bystanders. Dr. Morrison, the Menocals and ourselves were the only civilians on the spot. The soldiers were arresting all the Chinese they could see, beating them with their guns in a most brutal way. One poor Chinese with a double fracture of the leg was being pushed and beaten along by the excited soldiers within a

few yards of us. It was a sickening sight. A dead horse was lying near us as well as the bodies of several wounded soldiers and police.

"The police meanwhile had surrounded the suspected shop, wherein they discovered two young boys with more bombs on their persons; so these boys were accused of being the assassins. But the police were not satisfied with capturing only two culprits. They arrested everyone who happened to be on the spot, bystanders and all. Eighteen people were wounded. Two bombs were thrown, only one of which exploded. It fell directly behind the Premier's carriage in the midst of his bodyguard. Yuan was untouched and his carriage went tearing down the street back to his own house. He was very cool and only concerned about his wounded men. For several hours the street was shut off by troops, and no one was allowed through the lines, but later in the afternoon the traffic was resumed, the street filled with carts and rickshaws and with people with unperturbed faces. No one would have known anything unusual had occurred."

After two months of inaction Willard Straight became impatient with the irksomeness of his job and disconcerted by the discouraging conditions under which he was working and his inability to accomplish important results. He and his wife were leading an entertaining life in Peking. They very much enjoyed their association with the Calhouns, M. Casenave, Dr. Morrison and their other intimate friends but they both keenly desired to return home. Willard on several different occasions telegraphed to Mr. Davison for the necessary permission. For a long time Mr. Davison preferred to keep him in Peking and would not consent to recall him. Late in January, however, he cabled

permission to take a trip to Manila and to stop at Shanghai on the way and report to the Group what the Revolution looked like. And just before they started for Shanghai, Straight received news that the Group had decided early in the spring to bring him back to New York to act as Mr. Davison's assistant in directing the American end of the Group's activities.

From Shanghai Willard wrote a report to the American Group on the political situation as he found it in the South, which will serve as a fair reflection of his personal attitude at that moment towards the Revolution. "In Shanghai as in Peking it seems generally conceded that the Manchus must go; in Shanghai, too, strangely enough, Yuan-Shi-Kai is apparently considered to be the only man who can bring order out of chaos. How this is to be done, however, how he is expected to conciliate the rival factions which even now exist in the revolutionary camp, how to disband the forces, composed largely of men who have taken arms for gain rather than for patriotic reasons, is not stated. I was in fact more disappointed by the dearth of practical constructive ideas for the future than I was impressed by the sincerity or efficiency of the destructive force of the rebellion.

"Yuan, if he be made President of the Republic, will, even with foreign aid, find it more difficult to restore stable conditions now than he would have done as Premier of a constitutional monarchy.

"It seems, however, that a government, called a Republic, will be established, and that at the outset Yuan as President will be assisted by a coalition Cabinet composed of members of his own present organization as well as men who are now associated with Sun-Yat-Sen. This govern-

The living room at the Straights' house in Peking

ment, however, will be popular only in name. It will be a military dictatorship, and decide the machinery for elections and the qualifications of voters. The degree of provincial autonomy has not yet been determined. Yet this government, it is claimed, will satisfy the craving for liberty, which, it has been asserted, has been responsible for the popular upheaval.

"Though the outlook for the immediate future seems gloomy, and though I have but little faith in the disinterested motives of the Camorra who are now directing the republican party, I feel confident that, whether the Chinese themselves solve their difficulties, or whether foreign intervention is required, no matter whether a restoration of order is brought about by the Chinese themselves or by foreign intervention, it will be followed by an era of development such as China has never known. The Revolution, whether

its leaders be patriotic or purely selfish, will purge the Chinese body-politic, and though it may be exhausted for some time, it will, in the end, be better for the travail through which it is now passing."

Willard and his wife did not return to Peking until February 25th, the intervening weeks being spent in Manila and in a voyage on an army transport from Manila to Nagasaki. They returned to Peking via Seoul and Mukden and refreshed their memories of those places. During their absence the Revolution had to all appearances won a complete triumph. On February 12th the Manchus abdicated once more, this time finally and successfully. They turned over the government to Yuan pending the election during the summer of a National Assembly. Three days later Sun-Yat-Sen resigned as provisional President of the Southern Republic in favor also of Yuan and in form China regained her unity at the same moment that she gained her liberty. The day after the Straights returned to Peking, Tang-Shao-Yi came back from Shanghai in triumph. "As we were walking," writes Dorothy Straight, "we saw the arrival of Tang. He bowed to us as he passed. Imagine the sensations of this man, who left Peking three months ago as the representative of the Imperialist cause and returns now as the representative of the victorious republicans. His triumph must be overwhelming. He has always been a revolutionist at heart, and now he sees this great capital decked out in one mass of revolutionary flags."

But the transition was not to take place without a certain amount of riot and bloodshed which, so it happened, was brought home to Willard and Dorothy Straight by a vivid and dangerous personal experience. About a week before leaving for Manila they had under the advice of friends

abandoned their house in the Manchu city and taken temporary refuge in the Legation, but after their return there seemed to be no reason for continuing the precaution. The Republic under the presidency of Yuan was generally accepted, and there seemed to be no hostile armed force in the neighborhood of Peking. The danger of fighting between the Manchus and the Chinese had passed. But this order and satisfaction were superficial. On February 29th, for the first time since they arrived in Peking, they witnessed an example of the senseless bloodshed and suffering which the progress of even the best behaved revolution seems to exact.

"On the afternoon of the 29th," wrote Willard to a friend, "everything was perfectly quiet. Dorothy and I came in at about seven-thirty and she was dressing for dinner while I punched out a memorandum for the Legation. At about a quarter to eight there was a banging and crackling; some of the reports just outside our gate. We paid no attention for we thought it must be a fire-cracker celebration for the Republic. A servant who started with the memorandum for the Legation, however, rushed back to say there was fighting between Yuan's men and other soldiers in the street. I went to see what the trouble was, when zing, zing, a couple of shots sang overhead. The coolies who were gathered about the gate beat it for cover. The pop, pop, popping continued and our roof lines stood out sharply against the glow of the first fire. I told Dorothy that it looked like trouble. She didn't mind a bit, but went on dressing for dinner, calm as you please, and objected strenuously when I advised her to get into a street dress in order that, if necessary, we could clear out to the Legation.

"The rattle of rifle fire increased and we both supposed that whoever was making the trouble was being driven

off the streets by Yuan's patrols. Dorothy held that once the disorder was put down, the city would be safer than ever, because of the extra precautions that would be taken. She consented, however, to pack a bag to be ready in case of emergency, and did don a street gown. I took my bath and was half dressed when Dr. Morrison of the London Times, who lives next door, came in to reassure Dorothy that there was no danger, that there was looting and street fighting going on but that foreigners were allowed to pass unmolested.

"That didn't sound so darn cheerful, especially as more fires had been started and the whole sky to the north of us seemed ablaze, while the firing continued unabated, the crack of rifles punctuated by the booming of field pieces somewhere in the distance and by the burr of machine guns nearby. It would have been folly to try to get through the soldier-filled streets without a foreign guard. We therefore sat tight and dined. Chambers came in from an adventurous walk. He reported no fighting, but said that Yuan's men were on the loose, that they were shooting into the air, smashing in shop fronts, looting and setting fire to the places they gutted. The noise of the gatlings, we later discovered, came from the Imperial Palace, where the guards had blazed away from the street to scare off any venturesome gentlemen after the Palace treasures.

"A few minutes later there was a babble of many voices outside our compound. Then came the crashing of glass, the rip-rip of planking and the shock of rifle butts on barred doors. The looters were at the silver shop, just across the alley—a very narrow one—from our gate. Chambers and I stood in the courtyard and with difficulty persuaded Dorothy to go indoors. In a moment there was a pounding

at our gate. I can tell you my heart bumped a bit and I frankly confess I was scared. However, I went for the gate expecting to find a mob of soldiery. Then came a voice, in Chinese, 'Open the gate, Dr. Morrison is here.' I thought they were after him. The coolie fumbled with the key, so I pulled, Morrison pushed from outside, and the whole show came in on us. There was no trouble however. Morrison, with great kindness, came to say that he thought Dorothy would be better off in his place, where a number of foreigners were gathered. We left Chambers here and walked to Morrison's gate. The street was bright with the fire-glow. Luckily there was little wind, and that from the south, carrying flames away from, rather than towards us, otherwise we would have had a bad time. Parties of from two to a dozen soldiers were walking or running along, carrying bundles of loot. Every now and then they would stop to tie up their ill-gotten gains or to smash in the doors of some shop which had up to that time escaped their attention. Some carried torches used to light them while they pillaged, which were then dropped on the floors to start another conflagration. The firing continued but we reached Morrison's seemingly unnoticed by the busy gentlemen in uniform. We stayed there until a guard of American Marines came out on the trot to rescue us. From the balcony we could see the street filled with soldiers rushing back and forth, followed by coolies, upon whom they loaded their spoils. Across the road a large bazaar and theatre was burning and the roar of the flames mingled with the fusillade which still kept on.

"After an hour and a half, twenty men came for us. Dorothy with her maid in her lap, the bags tied on behind, piled into one rickshaw and we started at double time down

the street to the de Menocals. They came out on horseback, Mrs. de Menocal riding astride in an ordinary street gown, their rickshaw laden with bundles, and a couple of coolies with a huge packet, a blanket into which de Menocal had thrown all his wife's dresses, between them. Casenave, who had come to see that we were all right, took part of our guard and started through some little alleyways to guide the men to the house where Patchin, another American, lived and later brought them in on the double quick.

"We reached the Legation in safety and untroubled by the gangs of looters, who merely stopped to look at us and let us go by. . . . All during Friday, looting continued. Large numbers of soldiers with their arms, were riding about in rickshaws, absolutely on the loose. The West City was robbed that night and there was considerable trouble elsewhere, but none near our place. The stories of Thursday night began to come out. How Tang had taken refuge in the Legation quarter, how Liang-Shih-Yi and Sun-Pao-Chi, statesmen and patriots, had beaten it, without so much as a goodbye, from Yuan's dinner party and raced for shelted to a man named Henningson, who lived across the street and who sells life insurance! Most appropriate! De Margerie, the French Minister who called on Yuan the next morning, found him alone, save for his personal aide, Tsai-Ting-Kan. The aides, the secretaries, the bodyguard, even the servants had taken to the woods. Tang, it is said, tried to persuade Yuan—he sent him a letter—to join him inside the walls of the Legations.

"The looting had been most systematic and orderly. Foreign property had been respected and Chinese householders in most cases escaped without loss. The looters even went

so far as to return the carriage of one Hoo-Wei-Teh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, which they had borrowed to cart away their stuff. They also returned some private rickshaws likewise seized for the occasion."

"The trouble occurred," writes Dorothy Straight, "apparently because the soldiers' pay had been reduced and also because they heard rumors that Yuan was going to Nanking and the troops would be disbanded. They appealed to their General, but as he could do nothing for them they decided to break loose and steal for themselves." After plundering the city, they took their loot to the railway station, commandeered the trains, loaded the cars with their spoils and steamed away. At about the same time other disorders occurred in different parts of China, but they were sporadic and superficial. They did not originate in the dissatisfaction of the civilian population with the overthrow of the monarchy and the coming of peace, but in the dissatisfaction of the soldiers with the end of the war and its results. They were mutinies rather than a continuation of the rebellion and they soon subsided. But they damaged the prestige of Yuan-Shi-Kai, the strong dispenser of law and order, and they embarrassed him in organizing his new government, in asserting its authority and in providing it with necessary sustenance. The Revolution had more than cut in half the amount of the revenue which the central government was able to collect. It became a question whether and how far the Republic could meet its financial responsibilities at home and abroad. Apparently it would be quite unable to meet them without a large loan, part of which it would apply to meeting the immediate deficit and part of which it would use to provide fuel and oil for the machinery of fiscal and administrative reorganization.

As soon as he returned to Peking Straight plunged into the negotiations which his colleagues had already started for this so-called Reorganization Loan. He had all his arrangements completed for leaving China by the middle of March, but he hoped the contract could be drawn and initialed before he left. Circumstances looked favorable. The chiefs of all the four Groups, the diplomatic agents in Peking and the several Foreign Offices and State Departments all agreed upon the necessity of a large loan. Unless it was forthcoming China would probably default on her payments abroad and the market value of existing investments in that country would in that event undergo a sharp decline. The Chinese government was even more willing. It was hungry for cash—so much so that it could not afford to insist strenuously upon driving a favorable bargain. Under these conditions it looked as if, in spite of the large number of people to be consulted, they could all quickly arrange the amount and the terms of the Loan and the security for its repayment. The negotiations were conducted chiefly with Tang-Shao-Yi who became Premier of Yuan's first cabinet. Tang talked in huge figures. His government would, he said, need large sums to compensate for the loss of revenue until June, but by that time he expected income and expense would balance. Thereafter, he continued, the Republic would apply to the Consortium for a consolidated loan which would be used in economic development. He looked forward to borrowing a little matter of £500,000,000 at the rate of £100,000,000 a year.

There was, nevertheless, one serious obstacle to the prompt negotiation of a satisfactory contract. The European members of the Four Power Group could not very well undertake a loan of this kind without first arranging to

placate Russia and Japan. The governments and financiers of those countries had not shared in the formation of the first Consortium for obvious reasons. They did not possess any capital to export, and the route by which they penetrated China was territorial, commercial and political rather than financial. But from the point of view both of China and of the people whose business it was to lend money to her, the resulting relationship between the three corners of this triangle was wholly unsatisfactory. Russia and Japan were so powerful that they could not be ignored and so closely allied to the European members of the Four Power Group that the latter could not openly resist and fight the predatory combination. It was necessary to negotiate some kind of treaty.

Straight had reluctantly become convinced of this necessity. He had already submitted the idea to his chiefs, and he had during the preceding year discussed with a Russian agent the terms of a possible alliance. In May 1911 there arrived in Peking a Belgian promoter, named M. de Hoyer. He represented what was known as a Russo-Belgian Group —a Group, that is, for which Belgian bankers supplied the capital and the Russian government the political influence. Some French and British capital was included in the syndicate. This Group claimed to be a serious competitor with the Four Power Group for Chinese railroad concessions, but M. de Hoyer approached the representatives of the existing Consortium in a conciliatory spirit. He proposed a treaty rather than war. After a number of conversations with M. de Hoyer, Willard Straight recommended to his own principals a strictly limited alliance. He did not think the Russo-Belgian Group was strong enough to claim a "general understanding" or to come in on equal terms with the other

Groups. He considered that the dominant position of the Four Power Group in China was due to the conviction among the Chinese that they "represented nations friendly to China." But he did suggest the possibility of buying off the Belgian-Russian partnership by granting to it a sphere of influence of its own, that region to be Manchuria and Mongolia.

Nothing came of this recommendation at the time, and nothing could have come of it unless the treaty had included some method of buying off Japanese as well as Russian interference. But now that the Revolution had triumphed and they were negotiating a huge reorganization loan with which to place the new government on its feet and to finance the fiscal reform and the economic development of the country, the Four Power Group could not delay any longer the problem of dealing with the threat of Russian and Japanese opposition. The proposed reorganization loan would amount in substance to a much expanded Currency Loan. It would provide means for all the fiscal and administrative reforms which the progressive Chinese and the foreign friends of China had long proposed; and the carrying out of these reforms would require among other fundamental changes a revision in China's favor of the existing treaties to which all the Powers must needs consent. If it were successful a strong, independent China would emerge —a China prepared and able to resist Russian and Japanese penetration. If Russia and Japan did not consent and were not included in the concert, they would certainly block the whole plan. They could refuse consent to any change in the treaties and they could make the security for a big loan to which they were opposed look extremely unsafe. It seemed politically and financially necessary either to admit them to

the Consortium or to abandon that method of financing the economic development of China.

At the time of Willard's return to Peking the French and British governments had already decided that Russia and Japan must be admitted into the concert. The German Foreign Office did not object; the American State Department was willing. The American Group could not, even if it would, have resisted. The first entrance in Straight's diary about the loan reads: "Much excitement about Russian and Japanese participation, which I do not like, but which seems inevitable." Moreover, one of the chief obstacles to their entrance into the Consortium, which had been the Chinese dislike of seeing their oppressors and their friends share in the work of promoting the independence and the invigoration of China, seemed for the moment to have disappeared. On the 27th Tang expressly approved of Russo-Japanese cooperation and on the 28th he authorized the representatives of the Group in Peking to cable to Europe and America Yuan-Shi-Kai's approval of the extension to Japan and Russia of an invitation to enter the concert. The next day the mutiny broke out which gave the Provisional Government a sufficient excuse to press all the harder for immediate assistance—that is, for a temporary advance without waiting for the signature of a permanent contract.

A few memoranda from Straight's diary will disclose the course of the negotiations until he left Peking on March 26th. On March 4th he writes: "Difficulty regarding the Loan. Jordan is reported to have been instructed to invite Russian and Japanese participation before making move (that is, before advancing money in anticipation of the contract). He refused to recognize the necessity for acting at

once to save the situation and not risking postponement by opening this question. He stuck to his guns in spite of opposite views of the French, German and American representatives." Two days later they obtained authority from all four governments to lend the money, but Tang-Shao-Yi objected to the covering letter which gave to the Group a firm option on the loan for future monthly requirements and for purposes of reorganization. He complained of being tied hand and foot by a monopoly and he insisted on the introduction into the covering letter of the words "provided their terms are equally advantageous with those otherwise obtainable." On March 9th the letters were exchanged and an advance of 320,000 taels paid.

NOTE. His correspondence at this time contains the following account of a picturesque expedition to take possession of 150,000 taels in Prince Ching's palace.

"Through his connection with the redoubtable Sun Pao Chi, former Minister to Berlin and Paris and one of the Heirs of Yuan's dinner party, old Ching asked Casenave to go to his Palace and take out taels, 150,000, stored there, for deposit with the Banque de l'Indo-Chine. Casenave borrowed a revolver from me and with a dozen French soldiers and seven carts we went to get the dibs. The soldiers we left in the main street nearby, and with St. Phalle, Casenave's secretary, and our grooms we went on to the Palace. After some delay the young Princes turned up and took us into the old man's bedroom. They ripped off the top of the 'kang,' a sort of brick bed, and there we saw silver in all shapes and forms, bearing the marks of half the provinces of China, the 'shoes' or lumps of sycee varying in value from twenty to one tael apiece. A gang of coolies set to work to dig the stuff out and pile it in the little sycee chests. That finished, they took the sacrificial vessels off the family altar and knocked on the top thereof, disclosing more silver, this time in paper packets of $100.00 each. Another altar was opened. That was full too, and finally we took two great clothes chests, and emptied them of a miscellaneous assortment of silver taels. In the

Five days later facts leaked out about negotiations which Tang had carried on with other bankers and which explained his scruples and hesitations of the previous week. He had succeeded in also borrowing money from the Belgian syndicate, represented still by M. de Hoyer. On the 15th Straight had a conference with Tang which he describes as "hot and stormy." He regarded Tang's action as a clear symptom of bad faith. It indicated a continuation of the same shifty attitude towards foreign bankers on the part of the new Republican government as that which the Manchus had formerly displayed. The Chinese Premier distrusted the foreigner and did not want to be placed defenceless in the hands of any group. We are bound to admit that in cleaving to this suspicion he was not without excuse, but he was not always wise or candid in the expression of his distrust. His chief defence continued to be that of furtively playing one group of foreigners off against the other. In this par-

meantime the young Princes were skirmishing around for gold ornaments which they put in their pockets, and probably staked at poker that night.

"We caught one fellow getting away with a hundred taels, but the princelets didn't dare make a row. They had a guard of about fifty as tough looking citizens as I have ever seen, supposed to look after the place, and I imagine they feared to nab the culprit lest the whole outfit break out and commandeer the entire treasure. One of the princelets made an affecting speech to his cut-throats, telling them that the money was being taken away, not because the Prince distrusted his men, but because he was afraid they might not be strong enough, in case of trouble, to protect so large an amount. He further, so considerate was he, thought that when it became known that the treasure had been taken away the guards would be in much less danger of an attack. He presented them with eighteen hundred taels, and left them in peace. I wonder whether they went through the rest of the bedrooms that night."

ticular instance Tang, by bringing the Russo-Belgian Group into competition with the Consortium, broke down some of the obstacles which had heretofore interfered with the entrance of Japan and Russia into the combination. He also weakened rather than strengthened the hands of the European Groups who were more inclined to be friendly to China in their subsequent negotiations with Russia and Japan about the terms of the latter's admission into the partnership.

These negotiations took place in London and Paris during the following spring and summer. Willard and Dorothy Straight reached London towards the middle of April. They expected to remain in England for about a month and then to return to the United States. But the usual delay took place. The closing of the bargain with the new partners consumed almost the entire summer. Mr. Davison himself joined Straight in London towards the end of April for the purpose of representing the American Group in the transaction. There were times in which it seemed quite impossible to reach an acceptable agreement. The Russian and Japanese representatives sought to impose conditions which the other Groups could not possibly accept. Yet by refusing they endangered the existing partnership, for the French representatives practically served notice that unless Russia were admitted on terms satisfactory to herself the French Group would withdraw. The negotiations were continued and finally towards the end of June they discovered a generally acceptable compromise and a treaty was signed whereby the Four Power Group was increased to Six.

The agreement admitted Russian and Japanese representatives into full partnership in the Consortium; and it

Another of Straight's acquaintances among the priesthood of China

enabled, consequently, the Russian and Japanese governments, if they desired, to prevent the Six Power Group from financing projects which would make for the economic development of a strong and independent China. But they possessed this power anyway, and Willard Straight defended the arrangement as a mere recognition of this condition. In a letter which he wrote to Mr. Frank McKnight, who had succeeded him as the agent of the American Group in Peking, he says: "As the agreement stands, each Group has the right of withdrawal. This clause, of course, is open to objection, in that it gives Russia a practical veto. If they were to withdraw, the French and Japanese would follow suit, creating again the situation which for the present we have avoided. Despite the unsatisfactory wording of the agreement, however, in practice the result would have been the same. No matter how binding their promises, we could not have held the Russian Group nor prevented them from creating a competing Group which would have had access to the French market, in case the Russian government felt that other Groups in the combination were endeavoring to direct its activities along lines which the Russian government considered inimical to its special rights and interests. Furthermore, we know from our experience in the Chinchow-Aigun Railway that not one of the governments of the Four Powers is going to support any scheme opposed by Russia and Japan, though it is conceivable that in case they consider Russian and Japanese objections to some particular project unreasonable, they may endeavor to persuade these two Powers to change their views.

"There is, it seems to me, little question but that the agreement represents the actual state of affairs, and is very satisfactory in that we have avoided recognizing in so many

words the special position of Russia and Japan. It therefore does not alter the actual situation in any way except for the better, in that we are now joined with the two Powers who really at present are in control in the Far East. It is true that neither Russia nor Japan may really wish China to develop even within the boundaries of the eighteen Provinces, and that to this end they may endeavor to block every scheme for development which the Chinese may put forth and which the Groups under ordinary circumstances would have been prepared to finance. I doubt, however, if either of them will really attempt to follow this course. It may be difficult to handle the Six Power combination, but the fact that we are all together at last places us in a very powerful position, and the only one at all tenable in view of the present state of affairs in China."

The fact that they had avoided the recognition in so many words of any special position of Russia and Japan in China was from Willard Straight's point of view the saving aspect of the agreement. It was on this rock that the negotiation was almost wrecked. In the letter from which I have already quoted he explained the difficulties in the way of dealing frankly with this aspect of the relation between Russia or Japan and China. "The whole matter," he wrote, "moved in a vicious circle. Our governments insisted that we take in the Russians and Japanese, yet they consistently dodged the Manchurian issue which was really the fly in the amber. When the Russians and Japanese insisted that we should recognize their special rights and interests, which we, the Groups, quite rightly held to involve political questions with which we were not competent to deal, our governments, like the African ostrich, stuck their heads in the sand, oblivious of the situation which they were

creating in Peking, and told us on the one hand that they would not frankly recognize the Russian and Japanese claims nor would they allow us to proceed in doing business in China until the Russians and Japanese were satisfied. The agreement consequently, while in many respects it may be unsatisfactory, seems to me a most remarkable document, in that the Groups have managed to 'pass the buck' back to the governments, who will continue to hold the seat on the fence which they have managed to keep during all these troublesome negotiations."

Soon after the financial representatives of the Six Powers signed their treaty of alliance in Paris, Willard and Dorothy Straight sailed for New York to take up their life together in their own country. He never went back to China. While he continued to occupy himself in various connections with Chinese business and politics, his constructive work in the Far East had, all unknown to himself, come to an end. A few months after his return to the United States a new administration assumed office which, instead of encouraging, as the Taft administration had encouraged, the enterprise of the American Group in China, peremptorily withdrew its support. The withdrawal was for the time fatal to the enterprise. If the Group had participated in the negotiations for any new concessions or loans, it would have acted not only on its own responsibility but counter to the declared policy of its government. Inasmuch as the State Department had hitherto commissioned the Group to act as its financial agent in China and as its bargaining power was largely dependent on this commission, it had no alternative but to retire as a member of the Consortium. The retirement seemed at the moment equivalent to the ruin of that patiently and elaborately wrought structure of official

American financial diplomacy in China, to the building of which Willard Straight had contributed more than any other single man.

Many people naturally inferred that the structure was a precarious edifice which a few ingenious and enterprising but flighty pioneers had reared with the assistance of temporarily favorable political conditions. But Willard Straight himself even at the moment of apparent collapse did not doubt the endurance of their building and the ultimate necessity of restoring it. On March 25th, a week after the new administration had withdrawn its support, he wrote to Frank McKnight: "I believe the policy we have pursued has been so essentially sound that not only will it be justified by future events but it will assert itself to such a degree that even this administration will be forced to adopt more or less the methods of its predecessor." He was right. It was President Wilson's abandonment of official American financial diplomacy in China rather than the Group's participation therein which proved to be ephemeral.

Five years later a State Department which took orders from Mr. Wilson asked a group of American bankers to reconstitute the Consortium. The American government had come to see the necessity, if American influence in China was to be positive and constructive, of an instrument of national credit, such as the American Group, which could cooperate with similar groups abroad and finance the economic expansion of China. In the meantime the Great War had, it is true, entirely shifted the balance of political and economic power in the Far East and had very much increased the momentum of American intervention in the business and politics of that region. But the expectation of such an increase was part of the original calculation. Its

promoters had from the start built upon that assumption. They had foreseen the day when the relation of the United States to the economic development and political welfare of China would become the major preoccupation of American foreign policy. The attempt to anticipate that day and commit the United States to an immediately active participation in Chinese affairs was born of a thoroughly sound analysis of the part which we would have to play in the future regional politics of the Pacific. Any American government which was alive to its responsibilities was bound in the end to feel the force of the reasons which induced Messrs. Knox and Taft to favor a positive American policy in China with a financial group as its immediate agent and with a consortium as its final expedient for securing the consent of other nations to American proposals.

An interpretation of the Consortium, which justified the inclusion of Russia and Japan, was in 1913 only a hazardous guess, but the men who, like Willard Straight, believed in it guessed right. The course of subsequent events has done more to affirm than to deny the success of the guess. The most important event in Far Eastern politics since the Chinese Revolution has been the Washington Conference of 1921–22. In substance and effect it approved and confirmed the group of ideas which had prompted Willard Straight's work in China. The diplomacy of Mr. Hughes consummated the benevolent international protectorate over China under American leadership which John Hay had in effect proposed, which Philander Knox had attempted to realize and of which the Consortium was a feeble and tentative administrative organ.

CHAPTER XIV

TRANSITION

WHEN Willard Straight returned to New York late in the summer of 1912 he was looking forward to the satisfactory continuation of his past and present work. He did not, indeed, expect to live thereafter many months of the year in China, for he and his wife wished to have their children brought up and educated in the United States. He expected to have his hands full in helping Mr. Davison with the New York end of the business of the American Group; he expected that his association with J. P. Morgan and Company would result in their assignment to him of equally interesting jobs; and he was eagerly projecting other private and public activities at home for which his residence abroad had heretofore denied him opportunity. These anticipations were not fulfilled. His New York life did not consist in the continuation and fulfillment of what had gone before. It consisted in part of abortive attempts at continuation and in part of novel experiments which by the time he died he had not matured into a new career. Without realizing it he had entered upon a period of transition. His marriage and his return to the United States had altered the conditions under which he had achieved his success and to a smaller extent his own conception of the kind of success he wanted. Before his career could recover its momentum he had to adjust his disposition and his behavior to a more democratic social environment and a somewhat different moral outlook.

In China he planned, worked and lived as an ambitious free lance with everything to gain and comparatively little to lose by wagering his energy and goodwill on his success. Success came and brought with it moral growth. His chief enterprise was generous and humane. Its realization called for the exercise not only of the pioneer qualities of initiative, self-confidence, courage and inventive fertility but also the more sophisticated qualities of understanding, forbearance and both firmness and flexibility in negotiation. It brought him into intimate relations with other men, with whom he enjoyed a vivid and sympathetic companionship. As his enterprise gathered headway, its management levied an increasingly heavy tax upon his energy, his versatility and his endurance, but the drain did not narrow his outlook nor restrict the scope of his life. There was something in him which saved him from being satisfied with any one outlet for his energy, something which also found expression through the inclusiveness and the liveliness of his human sympathies. But the exchange of sympathy was not enough. He needed as the only way by which his personality could find expansion and deliverance to love and to be loved. Intense as was his interest in his work, he could not find happiness in carrying it on unless he could share its labors, responsibilities and rewards with a woman. Because he never cheapened his relationship with women, complete companionship with a woman whom he loved became for him the very fountain of life. When he did fall in love there was an accumulation of both repressed and sublimated feeling whose release carried him away. His passion took possession of him and brought about a focussing of his aspirations and strivings which was religious in its exaltation and intensity.

He married the woman he loved. Their union revolutionized the attitudes of both of them towards life. In his case it concentrated and spiritually fertilized a mind which under a less profound stimulus might have drifted towards a too complacent worldliness. In her case the impetuous momentum of his personality broke through the routine of previous associations, habits and ideas. He enlarged the horizon of her experience. She herself writes: "How pitifully unprepared for him I was, I now tremble to think. I came near letting the old things count the most. Willard came and lifted me bodily out of the old life and it fell away. I never even heard it fall. Almost imperceptibly, things assumed new values and new proportions. I began to share his own vivid life of imagination and dreams as if no other realities had ever existed for me. He tied winged sandals to my feet and I began to soar with him to new heights of exploration. Life suddenly became an adventure, a quest on which I could risk everything. Safety did not matter any more. In teaching me to look into the heart of things he taught me a new insight of which I had never dreamed. The process was an unconscious one to both of us, and I think I merely interpreted the heightening and intensification of my own life as the natural result of companionship with him, not analysing the deeper reason for the change."

The following extract from a letter which Dorothy Straight wrote to a friend from Peking in February 1912 may give the reader some idea of the quality of their union: "These days in Peking are very peaceful and quiet and there seems to be a touch of spring in the air which breathes always a wonderful promise. Willard and I have been wondering these last few days whether there is to be a very

Willard and Dorothy Straight and their son Whitney

special and sacred promise for us but we both long for it so much that we hardly dare to believe it yet. I suppose, after all, a man wants the greatest wish in the world nearly as much as a woman does. I'm just beginning to realize what it all means to Willard, that he too has been longing for it almost as much as I have. We cling to each other

with a new and wonderful happiness. It makes us feel very humble and very reverent; that we should try to be very good, better than we have ever been, so that we may be more worthy of this blessing. You can't imagine how sweet and cunning he is these days, and in the wonder of this new happiness there are moments when we are very close to tears from sheer intensity of feeling."

His marriage brought with it the vivid yet varied intimacy which was his deepest emotional need; but for that very reason it started ferments in his mind which subsequently modified his relations to the world. During his years of activity in China, he had conceived social service largely in political terms. His mind had never fairly faced the existence of social problems, such as the problems of poverty, labor and education, with which the state might not be entirely competent to deal. It was these problems in which his wife was most keenly interested and which his companionship with her and his life in an industrialized society imposed upon his mind. His increasing interest in them rendered him less interested than he had been in what he could accomplish by a business career, and less satisfied than he had been with public administrative work as an alternative to private business. He had never pictured himself simply as a business man, yet he now found himself both more specifically a business man than he had been before and less satisfied with the limitations of private business. His work had ceased to call forth his best energy and ability. He was no longer a pioneer carving for the civilization of his country a new domain which its ideals and influence would fertilize. He was no longer a scout in a semi-independent position on an exposed frontier, who although acting under instructions,

was necessarily allowed a great deal of discretion in carrying out his orders. He was only an employee in a huge office with very little freedom of movement or chance for self-assertion. During the first few months he had special work to perform in relation to the business of the American Group in China, and his work was exacting and responsible. But after Mr. Wilson had extinguished the American Group with the hose of presidential rhetoric, he ceased to have a job of his own in relation to which his advice was peculiarly influential. He was employed by J. P. Morgan and Company on a number of miscellaneous and confidential tasks, none of which opened much promise for the future or brought much satisfaction in their performance. He soon began to wonder how far his present occupations were worth while.

He had confidently expected his business activities at home to supply a further outlet for the qualities which he had revealed by his successful work in China. In this he was disappointed. A business as vast, as prosperous, as long established and as well equipped as that of J. P. Morgan and Company did not provide a congenial stage for the performance of a man like Willard with an innovating and restless disposition, a fertile imagination and an aggressive will. Only the chiefs of the firm were in a situation to practise the kind of initiative which he had put into his work in China. His freedom of movement would not, I think, have been very much increased even if they had asked him to join the firm, for the dent which a junior partner can make on such a huge and highly developed business institution is necessarily slight. Willard could not carve out a niche for himself in the office of J. P. Morgan and Company without a suppression of his individuality for which

he was totally unprepared. He would have had to wait and train himself to be useful in small and safe ways until the firm was ready to assign to him another independent position and a sufficient opportunity. But he could not conform and wait. He became impatient whenever his work failed to absorb his energy and beckon to his imagination. It was no wonder that in the late summer of 1915, about three years after their return from China, he decided to resign from the service of J. P. Morgan and Co.

His wife writes as follows about the tribulations which his attitude during these years towards his business involved: "Willard's abounding energy was contagious and exciting and his mental activity never flagged. He was forever dreaming dreams, albeit practical ones at that, and working out new ways of doing things and new things to be done. Almost every evening he would come home from the office with the same words on his lips—'I had a new idea today.' In spite of myself I was forced to become the critic, for though many of the plans were sound in conception the means of execution were often not at hand. And so it was that I often had to break the blow of his disappointments. In many instances he was unable to convince his superiors of the value of his ideas and then it became my task to try to prevent him from dwelling on what he considered his own ineptitude and to show him that circumstances themselves had created the impasse. Wall Street was uncongenial and difficult for him, though he loved and admired many of its leaders. His point of view was diametrically opposed to that of the business man. He felt the importance of building for the future as well as for the present, and to this end he worked to establish sound commercial relations with other countries irrespective of the

return in profits. He did not like to bargain; he hated competitive enterprise. He wanted to see certain things done; he cared little who did them; and it nearly broke his heart to see his ideas still-born because they did not promise to be immediately profitable. He had plans for helping China, for the establishment of better trade relations with South America, for a labor policy in one of the big banking houses, for making old traditions live and new ideas circulate, for international cooperation in backward countries, for mutual understanding between the peoples of the world—plans in general for more enlightenment at home and for higher commercial morality abroad. Most of his plans were destined for the scrap-heap, though many were adopted with profit by his employers. But he was considered too radical, too much of an idealist, too deficient in business experience. He obviously needed another field for the exercise of his imagination."

At the time of his resignation he proposed to study law not in order to practise in American courts but in order to know as much about legal principles as he needed for the ultimate practice of international law. It was a courageous plan for a man of thirty-five to undertake, and it was, I think, a wise plan. It committed him to work which was semi-public in character, which established him as the master of his own career, which turned to useful account the connections and the experience of his past and which was likely to open up congenial and varied future opportunities. As it happened, however, he did not pursue his intention very far. In October 1915 capitalists associated with the National City Bank organized a corporation particularly for the purpose of financing enterprises in foreign countries the promotion of which would benefit American trade; and

A portrait of Willard Straight by Cecil Davis

they offered the office of Third Vice-President in this company to Willard Straight. It was a tempting offer. The investment of American capital in business enterprises abroad with the intention of promoting foreign trade had always been one of his hobbies. He had repeatedly submitted the idea to J. P. Morgan and Company and asked them to back it and finance it. The American International Corporation, as the new company was called, provided for the first time an agency which possessed the resources and the

staff to transact this kind of business on the large scale which its adequate development demanded.

He remained Vice-President of the American International Corporation until he entered the army soon after the declaration by the United States of war against Germany. His relations with the other members of the executive staff of the company were most friendly and if his association with it was not altogether satisfactory, the defect was not the fault of his associates. But the new connection did not prove to be more agreeable to him than its predecessor, and towards the end he regretted his decision not to continue the studies which would have qualified him to set himself up independently as an international lawyer. It was not that he could not work in harness. He had demonstrated during his association with the American Group that he was capable of acting under orders and in loyal and patient cooperation with his chiefs; but if he was to submit to harness he needed to be travelling towards a goal which commanded his devotion and which was bathed in an atmosphere of public service. His work in Wall Street lacked such a goal. The transactions of private business could no longer keep him hitched. He had become more than ever a man who needed, in order to put forth his uttermost efforts, the stimulus of a disinterested and resplendent social object. And this want of glamor in his job was one of the chief causes of his restlessness during the years which intervened between his return to New York and his departure for France.

But during these years private business did not occupy him exclusively. He was keenly interested in many different public and semi-public affairs. He gave, for instance, a great deal of his time and energy to the promotion of

American foreign trade as a neglected branch of the economic life of his country. The election of a Democratic President resulted in a revision of the tariff with the adjustment of the duties upon a low protective or competitive basis. President Wilson called upon the country and its business interests to sharpen its wits in a competition with the wits of the world. The tariff gates which were thus swung open to render possible the entrance of more foreign merchandise became portals of exit into the world market for many American products whose manufacturers were quick to recognize that the period of isolation was over and that, if they were called upon to resist competition of foreign goods at home, they must compete with the foreign merchandise abroad. The enactment of the Underwood-Symonds Tariff was followed in the autumn of 1913 by the passage of the Federal Reserve Act which, in addition to giving order and system to the banking and currency of the United States, authorized national banks to maintain branches abroad. This was regarded as opening the way for an establishment of the purely American banking service overseas which had hitherto been almost entirely lacking.

While the financing of American foreign trade had been by no means difficult or impossible through correspondence with foreign banks, the creation of purely American banks promised to do much for our foreign trade. Nobody realized the significance of these facts better than Straight, nor welcomed more cordially the evidences that relations with the rest of the world were coming to assume to American business men and American statesmen something of the same importance which domestic business had hitherto occupied in their minds.

His interest in foreign trade brought him into contact

with Mr. James A. Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation. To Mr. Farrell more than to any other person is due the preëminence of the company in overseas trade. He was one of the directors and chief supporters of the American Manufacturers' Export Association which, as its name implies, was an organization of manufacturers engaged in foreign commerce. Another organization in New York which was interested in international affairs and commerce was the Pan-American Society of the United States, of which the president then was Mr. Lloyd C. Griscom, formerly Minister to Brazil and Japan and Ambassador to Italy. Willard himself was president of the American Asiatic Association which was composed chiefly of men who were trading with the Far East. These three organizations joined in calling the First National Foreign Trade Convention which was held in Washington, May 27–28, 1914.

The convention was considered to be a great success, but its leaders recognized that the force of good intentions generated at such gatherings often becomes inert after adjournment. It accordingly authorized by resolution the inauguration of the National Foreign Trade Council as a permanent body "to endeavor to coördinate the foreign trade activities of the nation." The Council started with a membership of thirty, later increased to seventy-five, merchants, manufacturers, railroad and steamship men, bankers, farmers and others connected with foreign commerce. It quickly grew under the energetic management of its president, Mr. Farrell, its secretary, Mr. Robert H. Patchin and of Straight into a most active and influential organization which conducted really useful conventions, aroused exporters to the need of a common policy, defined their

problems for them, collected information and statistics and prepared memoranda and public declarations with reference to legislation.

His interest in any subject, however, was never merely practical and prosaic. His preoccupation even with the export business found an aesthetic and social expression. He grouped the exporters together not merely in a council but in a club. Inasmuch as the group was composed of business men, it was condemned to be what is ordinarily known as a lunch club, but one must visit India House, as it was called, in order to realize what a lunch club is capable of becoming when it is designed by a man who sees the picturesque associations of a business and is endowed with a sufficient sense of propriety in form. India House was lodged, not in the thirtieth story of a skyscraper, but in an old mansion on Hanover Square, itself at first the home of a New York merchant and for many years the office of W. R. Grace and Company, one of the oldest of American exporting firms. And India House was worthy of the romantic associations of its name. Instead of putting up an appearance of a sumptuous or merely vacant dullness, as is usual with the interior of lunch clubs, it wore an air of impersonal but hospitable domesticity. With the able assistance of the architects, Delano and Aldrich, he suffused it with an atmosphere which was distinctive, entertaining and highly congenial. It was filled with memorials of the period when the eastern cities of the United States were centres of commerce rather than manufacture and when they traded as much with the Indies as with Europe. It was adorned with models of famous clipper ships, with seafaring prints and with other reminders of the flourishing and picturesque days of the American merchant marine.

It is scarcely necessary to add that the passing of the American Group did not dry up his interest in China. He had much to do with expanding the Pacific Commercial Company, which was carrying on a general trading business with and among the Philippine Islands, into the agency of a similar business on the mainland. He was occupied with schemes for agricultural development in Manchuria. Subsequently when the Siems-Carey Railway and Canal Company obtained from the Chinese government the promise of contracts for new railroads and for the reconstruction of the Grand Canal, he was hopeful, now that the war had extinguished the Five Power Group, of carrying them out as American enterprises. The consummation of the project was halted by Japanese opposition, and this, when it intruded, he proposed to overcome by admitting the Japanese to the partnership. At this moment when the war seemed temporarily to have made military force supreme in the world, he himself adopted for a while a somewhat fatalistic attitude towards the still rising tide of Japanese imperialism in China.

At the same time he was seeking to communicate his own interest in China and the Far East to his fellow-countrymen. In 1913 he was elected president of the American Asiatic Association, which he enlarged, reorganized and revitalized. A couple of years later he started the publication of a magazine which was called Asia and designated the organ of the society, but which really became an improved counterpart for one continent of the National Geographic Magazine. Asia not only printed the reproductions of photographs which portrayed Oriental life, scenery and exploration, but it accompanied these illustrations with able and readable articles which either added the story to the pic-

tures or else discussed with information and ability some of the political, economic and social problems of the various Asiatic countries and peoples.

The starting of a monthly magazine in order to enlarge the volume and improve the quality of the popular interest in the Far East was a thoroughly characteristic act on his part. The orator of Willard Straight's class in Cornell had predicted on the day of their graduation that he would become the editor of a great newspaper with something of a social policy. It was a shrewd prophecy. Willard never actually became the owner and editor of a daily newspaper, but it is probable that, had he lived, he would have been. The need and the habit of articulate expression pervaded his temperament. It had hitherto expressed itself with one exception in private correspondence, but as I see it, he could not under the conditions of his life in New York continue to satisfy that need with anything less than a vehicle of publicity which served the purpose and possessed the scope of a modern newspaper.

His desire for a comprehensive medium of communication under his own management, with a public scarcely distinguishable from the whole of his fellow countrymen, was a development of the impulse which from the beginning of his active life had in so many different connections urged him to record and express his experiences and opinions. For his temperament an experience or an action was left incomplete unless it was perpetuated in a record and communicated to its appropriate public. While he was young and his actions and impressions were of interest chiefly or only to himself, he perpetuated them in a diary or in sketches which were intended chiefly for his own personal perusal. A little later he went further and experimented with the

idea of earning his living either by literate or plastic expression, but a career in journalism or literature, illustration or painting did not finally attract him. As occupations they seemed to him special, unsubstantial and confined. He needed to communicate, but he needed to communicate the fruits of action.

When the opportunity for exciting and responsible action arrived during the spring and summer of 1907, the form and the object of the expression changed, but the need and practice of it persisted with unabated force. His chief vehicle of expression became his correspondence. He was engaged for the most part in expressing himself for the benefit of friends and associates. But not for friends and associates only. The publicity bureau which he persuaded Tang-Shao-Yi to set up was the first symptom of his need of reaching a large body of readers through regular channels of publication. It was only a flash in the pan, although it illuminated a great tract of his mental life. During these years his correspondence remained the means of communication upon which he most relied; and after November 1909 the letters were addressed to his future wife. He realized for himself the meaning of what he was doing by communicating his version of it to her.

After his return to the United States two significant changes occur in the nature of the audience for whom he feels the need of recording and explaining his behavior. His wife gave birth to a son named Whitney in the fall of 1912, to a daughter named Beatrice in August 1914, and to a son named Michael in September 1916. His eldest child, Whitney, soon occupied a place in his imagination similar to that formerly occupied by himself or his wife as the human being for whom he desired to prepare and transmit

an annotated record of his experiences. There was not much in his life during these years which he considered worth communicating, but in January 1915 and in March 1916 he went to Europe on missions which had political as well as business importance. It is deeply significant of the disposition and habit of his mind that the lengthy and detailed diaries of these trips—more detailed than any diary which he had written since 1905—were addressed to his son Whitney and were not intended to be read until his son grew up and was able to understand the message. This did not mean that his wife had ceased to be his most important audience. But he could communicate with her partly in letters but more by word of mouth after his return, while his children would not for many years be ready to listen or to read. He was impelled consequently to leave in some permanent form a transcript for them. His universe was a universe of discourse, and he must be articulate as a father no less than as a man of affairs, a friend or as a husband.

But at the same time he began to feel the need of a larger public and to seek a new medium of expression adapted to the circumstances and society in which he was now living. His business and official activities had ceased to absorb his energy. He was permanently resident in his own country for the first time since he graduated from college. He wished to participate in the political and economic controversies which were agitating the American people. He was ardently patriotic and at the same time definitely progressive in his own outlook. The nature of his business occupations interfered with a political career, but he wished nevertheless to do something to mold the outlook and behavior of his fellow countrymen. He could no longer accomplish his ends by personal negotiation. He was now living under condi-

tions in which the results he wished to see achieved were more than ever impeded or barred by the indifference or hostility of public opinion. Willard Straight began to search for a vehicle of personal expression commensurate with the larger number of associates whom he now felt the need of reaching and influencing.

Asia was one symptom of his interest in opening means of communication between himself and a larger public. The New Republic was another. He had been very much interested in a book on the moral and social implications of the American national ideal which I had published some years previously, and he hunted me up and asked me to make a report for him on the kind of social education which would be most fruitful in a democracy. Thereafter I saw him frequently, and in one of our conversations we discussed a plan for a new weekly which would apply to American life, as it developed, the political and social ideas which I had sketched in the book. He and his wife liked the plan, and we began publication in the fall of 1914. We hoped to make it the mouthpiece of those Americans to whom disinterested thinking and its result in convictions were important as agents of the adjustment between human beings and the society in which they live. The idea of a weekly periodical which, without speaking to a large popular audience, would seek to liberalize and leaven American political and social opinion, appealed to his lively sense of what opinion was doing to color and to rationalize social behavior. He had little interest in speculative or critical thinking whose relationship to practical affairs was not immediate and direct; but the New Republic, although a purveyor of opinions rather than a reporter of events or a recorder of facts, was expressly designed to avoid intellectual remoteness or

presumption. Its expressions of opinion were supposed to recognize the necessities of the statesman or the business man to whom all projects have to be translated into action, and to survive the test of actual conditions and interested opposition. Its liberal philosophy would always be focussed in an immediate practical program which sought the amelioration and the increasing revelation of human life, but which would be flexible, realistic and popularly intelligible.

There was, however, another aspect to the New Republic which distinguished it sharply from Willard's previous essays in publicity. His diaries and correspondence, as well as Asia and the bureau of publicity in China, were all means of reaching a public with a more or less personal interest or message. The New Republic was not. If it was actually to serve as a liberating and fermenting influence in American opinion, it would have to become the expression of a group rather than of an individual. The plan was to collect in the group people, who, however much they differed among themselves, agreed in considering such a publication desirable, were themselves capable of contributing to its success and to that end would form themselves into a little society of like-minded equals. The group as a whole was to determine the policy of the paper and to participate positively in its actual management; and it was understood that in order to give sufficient vitality to the group it must operate in all important matters by practically unanimous consent.

The proposed method of organization was put into effect. The experiment was in this respect unique, I think, in the history of weekly journalism. It implied an unusual act of self-denial on the part of Willard and Dorothy Straight, who furnished the money for its publication. They were to

finance the new project but they agreed to participate in its management only as one member of the group. While they were to be consulted about all important questions of policy or management, they were not, so it was explicitly understood, to possess the power of vetoing the publication of any article which their associates all considered desirable. Of course they could always withdraw their financial support, if they ceased to approve of the policy of the paper; and in that event it would go out of existence as a consequence of their disapproval, just as it had come into existence as a consequence of their approval; but so long as it existed it was to exist as the mouthpiece of a small society of which they were only a part.

As a matter of fact, while Willard Straight never swerved in his loyalty to the New Republic, the paper obviously did not satisfy his need for some vehicle with which to articulate himself with American opinion. It was after the New Republic started that he considered seriously the idea of buying the New York Evening Post or the Washington Herald. He longed for a daily newspaper, which would communicate public information in the guise of news as well as in the guise of opinions and which would be read by hundreds of thousands of people instead of only tens of thousands, to serve as his personal medium of expression. Eventually the impulse to control a vehicle of publicity as incessant, immediate and comprehensive as a daily newspaper would, I think, have become irresistible. We discussed plans which looked in this direction the day before he sailed for France. If he had returned from France, he would not have resumed his former association with the American International Corporation, nor, I think, with any banking or promoting business. Neither would he in all

probability have devoted his whole energy and time to the management of any publication. He would have continued to travel along many other routes, but these journeys, in so far as they had a public significance, would have seemed incomplete to him unless he could at the same time have rendered them articulate to his fellow countrymen by means of a newspaper.

The war and his enlistment in the army cut the knot of his perplexity for the time being. While he was in the army he decided never to go back to a business career; but he had not settled on any substitute, and the selection of a substitute after the war was over would have been as perplexing as ever. He would have remained a versatile and adventurous man, who wished with his own plough to turn up the earth in which the corn would subsequently grow. He was bound to keep a balance in his life between action and meaning, between conduct and value, which under the circumstances prevented him from concentrating his energy on an ordinary business, political or professional career. Yet, during the public and private turmoil of war, his mind could not fuse his equipment, his experience and his ideals into a specific program of work. That it would eventually have done so, no one can doubt who fully realizes, how imperatively his own conscience demanded of him singleness of purpose in his conduct, and what resources he could draw upon in order to obtain it; but when he would again focus his energies and on what, he himself left no prophecy.

CHAPTER XV

WANTED: A FIGHTING JOB!

WILLARD STRAIGHT was one of the few Americans who when the Great War broke out in the summer of 1914 was qualified by his training and experience to know what it was about. Most of the obstacles which he had encountered in Mukden and Peking were the indirect result of an unstable balance of power in Europe, and during the three winters which he passed in Peking, negotiating on behalf of the American Group, he dictated many memoranda for his employers in New York explaining at length the way in which the policy of all the European nations in China was determined by the expectation and the fear of the rapidly approaching conflict in Europe. When the war finally arrived he realized fully that even though the Austria-Hungarian and the German governments were more responsible for precipitating it than were the French and British governments, the international political system, to which they all consented and in which they all played their parts without protest, must bear the chief burden of responsibility. At the same time his sympathies were all engaged on the side of the French and the British. He had differed sharply from his British friends, but they were his people and as a matter of comradeship all his feelings went with them. If he had not been married, he might easily have enlisted in the British army.

He soon became interested in doing what he could to place American economic resources at the service of the

Allies. The firm of J. P. Morgan and Co., with which he was still associated during the first year of the war, became, as the result of his suggestion to Mr. Davison, the purchasing agent of Great Britain in this country, and during that winter he made two journeys to Europe in connection with this aspect of his employer's business. Later, in the spring of 1916 after he had joined the American International Corporation, he again went to England and France for the purpose of negotiating a measure of future cooperation between important financial interests in this country and Europe. As the war proceeded he became more, rather than less, pro-Ally in sympathy and conviction. Throughout 1915 he was satisfied with a policy of benevolent neutrality on the part of the American government, but during 1916 he began to favor active American intervention. While he wished the United States to intervene only after it had reached an understanding with the British and French governments about the terms of peace in the event of a common victory, he did not doubt that it would be possible to reach such an understanding. His interest, however, in the political as distinct from the military objectives of the war, persuaded him to regard with far more sympathy than did the majority of pro-Ally sympathizers, President Wilson's attempt in December 1916 and January 1917 to obtain a more satisfactory definition from the belligerents of their positive war aims. Naturally he was an ardent supporter of American intervention at the time it came and of the purposes it sought to accomplish.

"During your last administration," he wrote to President Wilson on April 8th, 1917, "I endeavored to support you. When election came I voted against you. Since your election I have again done what I could in my small way to

stand behind you as President. Your address to the Senate in January, your previous action in approaching the belligerents, your break with Germany and your memorable words that have aroused the world have made me grateful that you were elected, that this country has a leader today who like Lincoln has the steadfastness of purpose and the vision to proceed with patience and calm strength despite the criticism of those who like myself had cried for earlier action."

Willard was not the man to urge war upon his fellow-countrymen without sharing the dangers and the sufferings which he wished to impose upon them. He was very far from being bellicose. On the contrary, his work in China had centered upon an attempt to substitute conciliation and consent for force as the positive element in Chinese politics and national economics. But while he detested war, he was not a pacificist. He believed that nations could not under existing conditions accomplish certain political objects without war, and he placed a high estimate upon some of the qualities which military discipline is supposed to develop in martial peoples. He had observed during 1915 and 1916 a tendency on the part of the American people to avoid war because it was costly, dangerous and disagreeable, and being himself a valiant man, he reacted sharply the other way. He advocated increased American military preparation. He himself attended the first Plattsburg camp. In the course of six weeks' training he was promoted from a private to the rank of a commissioned officer because, as Colonel Reed, the Commander of the Camp, explained in a letter to his wife after his death, he had shown just the qualities of leadership and decision which a regimental officer most needs. He was at the time inclined to favor universal military service as part of a system of national education.

Under such circumstances he was bound to enlist in the army. It was a great pity that he was bound. A man of his diplomatic experience and ability as a negotiator would have served his country more usefully in the political rather than in the military branch of the government, but the Wilson administration, particularly at this time, was not disposed to trust anybody but Democrats with important diplomatic offices and it missed the opportunity of securing the service of an experienced, able, and loyal servant and an ardent believer in the political objects for which the war was being fought. His proffered services were immediately accepted by the War Department, and he was commissioned as Major and attached to the Adjutant General's office. He passed a large part of the spring and summer signing papers in a room on Governor's Island, but towards the end of August he was, much to his own delight, appointed assistant to the Adjutant of the 35th Division, which was training at Camp Doniphan in Oklahoma and which General W. M. Wright commanded. He fully expected to remain with this division until its training was completed and it took ship for France.

On October 29th, 1917, he was called to Washington and placed in charge of organizing the overseas administration of the War Risk Insurance Bureau. Congress had passed a bill which enabled every enlisted man in the army to take out an insurance policy on extremely advantageous terms, but the administration of the law, particularly in the case of the soldiers who had already gone to France, presented some difficult problems. The Treasury and the War Departments assigned to Straight the job of drawing up a plan which would carry the benefits of the new system to the troops in France. He made a rapid but thorough study of the problem, prepared a program which was provisionally

accepted by both departments, selected his assistants to carry out the plan and on December 11th sailed for England with a command of sixty-five officers and enlisted men in order to put it into effect.

When he sailed he resumed the practice which he had abandoned, with the exception of a few weeks in 1915 and 1916, since his departure from Peking in March 1912, of writing into a diary a complete record of his life. At the same time he wrote with unfailing regularity and at great length to his wife. The diary and the letters between them give such a complete account of what he did and thought in France that they can be left to tell their own story.

Tuesday, December 11, 1917 (diary): "A hectic three days. We should have sailed on Saturday the 8th. The delays are due to coal and the explosion at Halifax, but they were very welcome for I have lunched and dined with Dorothy, seen the Public Library, done two theatres, thrashed out a plan for a new political daily in Washington and an international news service with Herbert (Croly) and Walter (Lippmann) and generally cleaned things up. . . . All clear on board by 12:30. Dorothy stayed long enough to see the men and then went with a smile. She makes me very proud and very humble."

Friday, December 14th, 1917 (on board the transport) diary: "Had a talk with Leonard Wood. He is bitter against the administration. He thinks we're in for a long war and that German propaganda is trying to lull us to sleep. He considers a National Army best of all, in which I think him right. * * * Soldiers are never statesmen, or at least, rarely. May the civil power always be supreme, and the war end on any basis that will insure a lasting peace. I can't quite go Wood; I suppose because I will not

be an idolater. He's a real man, anyway, whether one agrees with him or not."

December 21st, 1917 (to his wife): "We're just entering the 'Zone.' Our guards are being strengthened and my poor men, who are typewriting and working with their officers, who have physical drill and have to clean—police, is the military term—their quarters, are now with the rest doing submarine lookout and watching water tight doors. The officers are on lookout and my men have been given the most important places in the boat. They are much better than any other outfit on board the boat, better dressed, better mannered, better disciplined. Ours is the only crowd that has worked all the way across. The artillery have never done anything save fuss and smoke and play cards. It's been such a chance for them to learn, but they've not taken it. They're a rum lot. The more one sees of the army the more one realizes the importance of command; as the commander is, so the men are. The highest officer always gives the tone to his organization, be it Division, Brigade, Regiment or Company. If he is sloppy the officers are worse and the men still worse. If he is snappy, the officers and men catch it—catch it from him, and catch it if they don't."

December 23rd, 1917 (to his wife): "As I've been writing Herbert (Croly) today, this war appeals to me less and less. It's something disagreeable we've all got to go through with and do our damndest in, but though I love soldiering I am more and more beginning to hate all it means. It's terribly unintelligent and unreasonable—the whole thing. I hate unfairness and greed and stupidity—and war is all that—and it is not redeemed by the fact that it brings out many heroic qualities in individuals and in peoples. It must in the end brutalize."

They arrived in Liverpool on Christmas Day without mishap, and from there went direct to Paris. Willard earned the gratitude of his command by the pains which he took and the money which he spent out of his own pocket in order to save them from unnecessary discomfort. He reached Paris on the 26th and started on his work with his usual promptitude and energy. There were at that time some 250,000 American officers and soldiers in France, and their number was rapidly increasing. They were living in some two hundred towns and villages scattered over a wide area. They all had to be seen individually, the insurance plan explained to them and their decision recorded. He had thirty-four officers and sixty-five enlisted men to help him. It was necessary to arrange for a great deal of travelling at a time when it was most difficult to obtain transportation. Fortunately he secured the loan of a number of Red Cross automobiles, and the Y. M. C. A. placed their huts at the disposal of his command. Prior to embarking he had laid out an entire program of operations and he took with him what he considered to be the necessary equipment. His associates report that his plan anticipated the conditions under which the work had to be accomplished. The period of automatic insurance—that is, the period during which officers and enlisted men were by the government automatically covered by insurance without any premium payments —expired February 12th, 1918. This was exactly two months from the day the command sailed from the United States. They landed in France December 27th, and in the short period between then and February 12th, they canvassed the entire A. E. F. for insurance and allotments, writing policies to an approximate sum of $1,250,000,000. Colonel Henry D. Lindsley was associated with Straight in

the work and succeeded him after he resigned. Early in January he wrote to his wife about his associate, "Lindsley has been perfectly devoted. He has absolutely effaced himself. He has been untiring. I have never seen any one who so completely subordinated his personality to the job. It is touching and in a way almost frightening."

January 6, 1918 (to his wife): "We've been working at our program for getting things done. The idea of using the Y. M. C. A. was inspiration. They may save our lives and have thrown themselves into it in great shape. But the task of covering all our people, in winter time, with roads as they are, with motors which we can only beg, borrow or steal from the Red Cross, Y. M. C. A. and perhaps from the army up to a point, is almost appalling."

January 10th, 1918 (to his wife): "Another day. That's the way I feel. The President's address appeared here this morning. Very interesting and I should think altogether admirable. He goes much farther than Lloyd George. I was particularly interested in the freedom of the seas paragraph, and the differentiation between the 'must' for reparation in Belgium and the 'should' about Alsace-Lorraine. It was cleverly worded. It is a good political offensive and a definite thing to fight for. We cannot take less, but the question is what do those 'shoulds' mean?"

January 15th, 1918 (to his wife): "Each day has shown progress in the development of our own organization and has brought reports of results from the parties operating in the field. Our people are, I think, doing awfully well. Some, naturally, better than others. We have ten Red Cross trucks, a number of Y. M. C. A. Fords, one Renault touring car, five ambulances, side cars and Fords borrowed where

possible in the field. Yesterday we bought two Renaults at enormous cost, but by bluff and quick foot work, not only made the Quartermaster pay for them but extracted two very good American chauffeurs. Some achievement, believe me, in this maze of buck-passing, which in most places goes on as merrily here as at home."

February 10th, 1918 (to his wife): "I stopped at G. H. Q. for two days and worked out the permanent basis for our organization a little more carefully. Then I left it for a week to see whether it would run. It did. Our people in the field have done a splendid job. They have cleaned up every unit in France—travelled I don't know how many miles, and seen I don't know how many people and by the date fixed. If the War Department had let our plans stand we would have had a bully machine but as it is we will have a good one, for I've found a way out. On Friday I hope I shall turn over to Lindsley, and myself go on to the Staff College. Grayson Murphy and I will room together, I hope. He's an attractive cuss."

February 14th, 1918 (diary): "Fine dinner with officers and men. Much touched by what they had to say. They were very fine. It was a good night and it has been a great bunch to work with."

February 14th, 1918 (to his wife): "Herewith testimonials to character, which I know you'll like to have. They made me very proud. We've had a successful time and it's been a big job well done. I'm tremendously proud of the detachment, of the fact that I organized it and led it. There's nothing like having charge of men. I'm sending it on to you, for I know you'll be pleased, too. It's all for you."

The "testimonials" seem worth reproducing in full. The first comes from the enlisted men. The second from the

officers. They indicate the kind of affection Willard provoked among the only American soldiers he was ever allowed to command.

"The first plunge from a warm house, affectionate relatives and a more or less benevolent employer to the cold impersonality of military life, is a shock that millions have lately been experiencing. There is no denying it is hard. In the Army one seems shorn of everything. The name goes first; Mister falls away and Private succeeds. Next our warm and possibly well-fitting clothes are taken away and the strange and often uncomfortable garments of the Quartermaster are given us after infinite standing in line. With the old name and the old clothes passes the old individuality.

"Your superior officer appears to take no interest in you, your tastes, your capabilities, your character. It is of no apparent interest to him that you are too warm in your overcoat; General Orders number So and So read 'The Service overcoat will be worn at all formations.' Your very name probably remains unknown to your Company Commander for months, and then he is aware of nothing more than that you are in the 14th Squad and not the 12th, and that you are short a hat cord on the clothing slip.

"There seems no longer such a thing as kindliness or generosity or affection. Our employer would have helped us to get ahead in life. The ordinary Company Commander appears to desire nothing except that we keep the cadence and salute him properly in two counts. One ought not to live or fare comfortably, because hardship and deprivation are the rule of a soldier's life.

"Such is the world military as it appears to the recruit. Such it appears perhaps indefinitely under many officers.

"With us it has been extraordinarily different. We early acquired a feeling that somebody did care. There was no lack of discipline, no encouragement to shirk or loiter, but there was evidence that a watchful and kindly eye was on us. Sweaters and helmets were not in our military experience, but sweaters and helmets came to us all. Pullman sleepers were not in our military experience, yet we rode to New York in Pullman sleepers. We were never oppressed by the dogma that to be comfortable was to be unmilitary.

"The supreme evidence of this came at Governor's Island. We found ourselves there one bitter cold morning; the Island was windswept, the barracks unheated and our blankets could not begin to keep us warm. It was wretched and we felt wretched. But in no time there came from higher up the realization that we must be wretched and might as well be comfortable. Thereafter we lived in a steam-heated hotel. On the 'Adriatic' no effort was spared to make us comfortable. No enlisted men ever received such consideration. If we did not all have Cabines de Luxe on the promenade deck it was through no fault of the Major's. And many a morning in the mud of the Vosges or the mire of the Marne we thanked Heaven and the Major and his overshoes, that our feet were dry.

"It is much that his purse was opened for us unstintingly. It has meant even more for our self-respect and happiness that we were in his eyes not mere machines but human beings. Not a private but could shake hands with the Secretary of the Treasury and be introduced by name. Not one so humble as to pass unnoticed or unrecognized.

"For all Major Straight has done for us it is difficult to make any written expression of gratitude. But there is not a man but feels it, not a man who has not worked harder and more loyally because of it, not a man who would not exert himself to the utmost to please such a Commander, and there is not a man but feels an immeasurable loss at his leave-taking. We, the undersigned, therefore, on behalf of ourselves and of those of our detachment stationed in England and in the Field, subscribe our names to this word of appreciation."

"From: The Officers of the War Risk Section, L. of C., A. E. F.
To: Major Willard D. Straight, A. G., U. S. R.
Subject: An appreciation of Leadership.

1. We present this to you as a token of high personal regard and of regret that the time has come when you are leaving us. We have been with you since you formed in Washington the organization which should administer the provisions of the War Risk Act in Europe and which should see that every American soldier abroad understood the insurance provision of that Act and had the opportunity to participate in its benefits.

2. We have seen the plan which you outlined in Washington develop. We have seen the organization, brought overseas, perform the function for which it was intended. Under your direction applications for insurance in this organization aggregate approximately eight hundred million dollars.

3. Your foresight, your clear conception of the job, your attention to the most infinite detail have accomplished results of a high order. We deem it a privilege and an inspiration to have worked under you.

4. We wish you great success in whatever field of endeavor you may enter hereafter. As the years unfold you will never have more sincere friends than those who, tonight, bid you Godspeed."

February 17th, 1918 (to his wife): "Here I am at G. H. Q. and tomorrow I am off, really for the front, to be with a division in the line for a week—after which I go on to the Staff School for the course. Bennett, all smiles a yard wide, is going with me."

February 18th, 1918 (to his wife): "Here we are—with the Headquarters of an American Division holding a sector on the Western Front. It seems unbelievable. We can hear the guns rumbling in the distance—35 German planes went over yesterday. They bombed the town a few days ago. To think that after these months of skirting in and about war one should be here at last. Tonight as we came out from dinner we passed the ammunition supplies going up—wagon after wagon rumbling along the moonlit street of this bare Lorraine town, the men in their tin hats and their gas masks hanging over their breasts. This afternoon we saw a column of Senegalese coming in from their work—heard them first, rather—a wild, devilish sort of a chorus. They danced as they came in—a heathen crew indeed!"

February 21st, 1918 (to his wife): "The Chief of Staff went out last night with a French officer through the barrage and

with the attack into the German trenches and picked off an officer's helmet. It was a damn fool, but ridiculously brave, thing to do. Nevertheless it helps the division morale to have staff officers do just such things—to take the same risks that the men do. I don't think that is my line!"

February 22nd, 1918 (to his wife): "Bar political changes of which one cannot judge, the war can be won only by fight-

Sketch of Col. Frank McCoy by Willard Straight

ing, and that we'll have to do, unless I'm much mistaken. Hard fighting with losses. I don't think I'll like it much; but I guess it's up to me. The more I see of it the more I feel that it's the duty of everyone who has any quality of leadership to get into it, the more I am convinced that one cannot get ahead with the war if one is content with desk work. One may be assigned to this or that, but one should try to fight. The thing that McArthur did the other night is what one must be ready to do—not foolishly for a stunt, but for the sake of morale. As I think of the boys who marched past yesterday, who will be ordered over the top, I know that if one is on the staff that orders, one must be ready ever so often to go over with them. With Americans this is particularly so; we are all pretty much the same. They have to go; we can duck it on the plea of staff work if we wish; but it's ducking. We're none of us so valuable. To order them one must know how they do it, what the difficulties are—how men can be saved as far as possible."

On February 24th, Straight went to Langres, a picturesque town in Lorraine, to attend the second course of the Army Staff College which lasted through March, April and May. Many acquaintances and friends, including Henry L. Stimson, Grayson Murphy and Herbert Parsons took the course with him. "There were," says Mr. Parsons, "150 officers attending the second course, about 80 of them regular and 70 reserve officers. While the course was substantially the same for all, the pupils were divided into three sections according to which one of the three sections of staff work they had followed or expected to follow upon leaving the College. Most of the lectures, however, were given to the class as a whole and the map problems were the same for all. Straight was for the time being assigned to G-1,

which had to do with the transportation and supplies. Had he remained in that section and become an Assistant Chief of Staff G-1 of a Division he would have been responsible for drawing up and carrying out the plans to supply food, clothing, equipment, ammunition and transportation for a Division of 28,000 men. The Great War has sometimes been called a G-1 war, for the fighting which could be done by stalwart Americans was limited only by two things, the ability to get ammunition and supplies to them and their own endurance. The work of G-1, however, was supposed to look towards the rear. Willard wanted work which would look towards the enemy lines and bring him into close touch with troops. He therefore during the course secured a transfer to the G-3 Section, which was the section that had to do with operations.

"All his work at the Staff College was admirably done. Lectures were given by British, French and American officers. The methods of the British and French armies varied somewhat. In some respects the American doctrine had not yet been determined. There was therefore some conflict in the lectures. Willard made a comprehensive compendium of lectures as they went on, and was in position immediately to refer to the authority for any particular view.

"The course consisted of three lectures a day, except Wednesday and Saturday, which from 8 in the morning until 6 in the evening, except for lunch, were given up to map problems. These map problems would assume that a Division or part of a Division was located in a certain way with reference to a map and that it was designed to move the Division or make an attack or some such thing. The problem was to write out the necessary orders and usually

to accompany those orders with a map. The orders had to be just what the orders would be if it were a real event. The localities were localities on the Western front. The problems were frequently problems that had actually occurred. The test was one which the officer might often have to meet later on in his daily work. It was a splendid method. While the student could use any book or lecture, he frequently did not have time to look into them and he learned his subject so well through the problem that it stayed with him as part of him afterwards. Those hours from 8 to 6 were hours of intensive work. Willard's work was always done as a result of thoughtful planning and in a clear logical manner. His maps because of his artistic ability were well-nigh works of art. Occasionally he did a little decoration on them in the last five minutes' work, if he had time, and they became famous.

"As the result of his work at the Staff College he was recommended for a staff appointment. It is said that he was recommended for a greater variety of positions than any other student at the College, and that, although he was only a reserve officer, his marks were from the start among the very highest."

March 2nd, 1918 (to his wife): "Stimson, Murphy and I motored down from G. H. Q. a week ago. We're only an hour distant, and in the falling night we found our billets in this quaint old walled town. Grayson and I have a house—11 rue Chambroulard—with a Madame Georges. We have the whole house to ourselves. Dining room and kitchen on the first floor, a little courtyard with a very dirty 'cabinet,' two nice rooms on the 2nd, the largest of which G. won on the toss. On the third floor we have two rooms, ceilings 5 feet from the floor, one of which will be

our guest room, the other occupied by G's man Edward, formerly of the Rockaway Hunt Club, and Bennett. Bennett is a jewel. He's been with me everywhere, to the front and everywhere else. He is getting a little French and is most useful. He can take care of himself and of me too."

March 10th, 1918 (to his wife): "On Saturday we had a map problem—the move of a Division by rail. We had to write the orders, beginning at eight A. M. and ending at six P. M. It was some job. I couldn't finish mine, for the working out of train schedules took me too long. In this problem we were to apply the things we had been supposed to learn during the week. Then the instructors turn over to us some other officer's solution and we criticize that and turn it in on Monday. Even Sunday is occupied. Now I am writing after dinner in a few moments before I start reading tomorrow's dope. I have had Stimson's paper to go over and raised thunder with it. I suppose someone else is doing the same with mine."

March 17th, 1918 (to his wife): "We are working very hard. We had a most interesting problem on Wednesday and again yesterday. I think I'm catching on a bit more all the time. I know I'm learning a lot, though I don't seem to be able to paste these problems as I'd like to. Still, as I see what others do, I guess I'm no worse anyhow than most. Certainly no better. We are up every day at quarter to seven, breakfast at seven-thirty and to the Staff College in an old barrack building at 8:15. Lectures begin at 8:30 and go through till noon. Then we lunch at 12:10 about, and begin to study again at 1:30, work till 4:45, ride till 6:45, dine at 7:30, start study at 8:45 and work till 11:30 or after midnight."

March 18th, 1918 (to his wife): "We rode at five as

usual, out along the plateau that overlooks a wonderful sloping valley. The Marne, a healthy, clean little brook, rushes out from the foot of a cliff about 50 feet high. Here there is a cave in which it is said Sabinus—Chieftain of the local Gallic Tribe who had revolted against the Romans—was hidden for nine years, living with Eponine, his wife. One can imagine them looking out across this smiling valley, with the glistening winding little brook, now so famous as a river, and anxiously wondering if the Romans were coming. The soil is rich and brown and is just tinged with new green. It looks for all the world like the patine on a bit of gold bronze, the little Mill nestling in the willows, the red tiled village in the hollow with the wisps of smoke rising, a man sowing, an old woman digging up around her vines, a heavy, stalwart pair of horses with an old man, trudging home, in the distance the line of smoke left by a passing train, the long shadows stretching over all in a great sweep from the bluff along which we were riding. It is all so soft and mellow. One wanted to sing, to paint."

April 3rd, 1918 (to his wife): "Tonight an old French Commandant—Hugon—and a Captain Loriot dined with us. The old man is a fine type. He is a Lieutenant with Petain. He has lost his son and he's sad, terribly sad, but bucks up and cracks jokes. He is really delightful. I shall never forget the scene tonight. We drank to France and victory. We all stood there, the candle light streaming up into our faces, and our eyes filled with tears as he spoke of France, of all that she had suffered, of her sons dead, her land laid waste, her cities razed, of the poilu never so well disciplined yet never so cheerful as today, the poilu who has but to do and die. For the officer, he said, there are decorations and honors, other jobs—comforts if he can

afford them. For the poilu there is nothing but to go forward on the word of command. Where would France be after the war, he wondered."

April 7th, 1918 (to his wife): "Bjornstadt—the head of the school—is, as I wrote you, to be made Chief of the 3rd Army Corps. He spoke to me about being Asst. G. 1 on his Staff; but I told him I didn't want it, because G. 1 is the administrative end. It would have meant that I would have had to work out road schedules and things like that which I hate. I thought I'd try for a Brigade Adjutant's job, which would bring me near troops and lead ultimately to a command. But Mac* says that it wouldn't—that General Staff is the only thing that will get us command. Command is what I want and is what I think I would do best. I believe I could handle a Regiment or a Brigade or a Division—that is, from the human and organization standpoint, not from the military yet. I'll get it if the war lasts —which I hope it won't, if we can get the peace we want at an early date. That is why I want to get into 'operations' or G 3, so I have asked Bjornstadt if there was any chance of my getting with him as Assistant G. 3. I don't know that I can, for the military experience is what I lack. If I get it, it will mean that at the end of the course—or earlier perhaps—I shall go up to a Brigade and then to a Division. Both jobs will be dangerous. Now you may wonder why I want this sort of work when the other is available and must be done, and when I could do it. I don't know that I can give you any entirely reasonable answer, save that that is my hunch. This is a fighting game. As I wrote you before, I hate the whole thing. I am scared to

*Col. Frank McCoy then attached to G. H. Q.

One of a group of sketches made in Normandy while on sick leave

death. If I weren't I should be much more willing to take the easier way, and for me it would be very easy. Of course if I am ordered to administrative work I'll do my best, but so long as I can control my own destiny and assignments I am going to try for a fighting job."

April 19th, 1918 (to his wife): "I am reading a fascinating history of this town that Madame Flocquart just brought in this afternoon. Did you know that it was Caesar's base for operating against the Germans, that under St. Didier it held off the barbarian hordes, that it fought the Saracens and Normans, beat off the English in the Hundred Years' War, was loyal to Henry IV during the bloody days of the League, fought the Swedes, was only entered by the Allies in 1814 on their way to sign the Treaty of Chaumont because Napoleon hadn't fortified it, and although the Prussians could be seen from its walls in 1870 it was never occupied? The Prefect, the Bishop and the towns-people vowed that if their city was saved they'd put up a chapel to the Virgin, which was put up in due course. The armistice was signed just as the Germans were making ready their attack. At the beginning of the present war, too, the citizens made a great procession to this shrine and prayed that their town should be saved. Up to date it has been, and now think of it, it's the seat of the American Army Schools. I'm going to try to work up a little pamphlet addressed to the students at the schools to tell them the story of Langres, to wake them to the possibilities of looking into the wonderful history of the towns they'll be billeted in and of the ground over which they'll fight; and then get General Pershing to sign it. I don't know that it can be done, but I'm going to try it anyway."

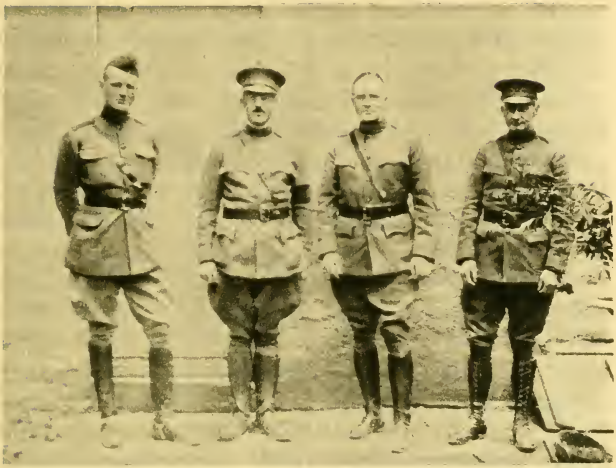
April 24th, 1918 (to his wife): "One feels rather alone at

times. I've asked Davie (Mr. H. P. Davison had just visited Langres) to give you one message and to tell you of our talk here tonight. There're certain things that are seared into our souls; I've asked him to tell you and I want you to tell Herbert (Croly). The N. R. must continue its double-barrelled policy of praise and blame—praise for diplomatic endeavor, blame for administrative failure. The one can't make up for the lives the other will lose. That's the tragedy. . . . When I think back I was quite a lad once in international circles—a pioneer. Now I'm submerged and the others are on the crest of the wave. I seem always to have stepped farther and farther out. They had the foundation, which was power with their fellows at home. I had the knowledge and the method, which is only a means to an end, and which can be acquired—Q. E. D. If you want to count, establish yourself first at home."

May 19th, 1918 (to his wife): "The course is practically over. It's been a really wonderful training. We've all learned a tremendous amount, I'm sure. I can begin to make a noise almost like a soldier. What will happen now, of course, we don't know. The indications are increasing that Grayson (Murphy) will probably be put at the head of the aviation job, and if he goes he will ask for me to go with him. He and Bjornstadt are talking it over now in the next room. (Later) . . . Bjornstadt told Grayson by all means to ask for me if he got the new job. The General returns to G. H. Q. tomorrow, so there may be a decision on it. I hope so. Incidentally, Bjornstadt told Grayson this, which is very flattering, so I'll repeat it. *Don't you repeat it.* He said that I was made for a Staff Officer—that in three months I'd be able to handle almost any job that was given me and to do it better than 50% of the Regular

Officers doing Staff work; and that in a year I'd be one of the very few, very best General Staff Officers in the army."

May 22nd, 1918 (to his wife): "All day we've been working out the manoeuvre plan for the Third Corps on Saturday. It's really great fun—under a man like Bjornstadt. He's an inspiration. He outlines his policy and then puts us to work. The general plan is this: An area is selected for the exercise, a situation is imagined—what our armies are doing and what the enemy is doing and what we want to get. Then it is decided that we attack at a certain sector. All this is, so to speak, general or army dope. Such a decision would be made by the Army Commander who would give the Corps Commander a general plan of what he wants done. Then we prepare the Corps orders. It would actually, with all its annexes about artillery, airplanes, tanks, engineers, roads, evacuation of wounded, supply, food and ammunition and water and liason-plan, take up about 90 typewritten pages. For this exercise we've only done the plan of infantry attack, the artillery, supply, etc. and the plan of liaison. The latter was my job. That covers the tactical plan,—i. e., the layout of the contacts that must be established from the Corps Headquarters right down to the first line platoons,—the connection with the artillery and the airplanes, the plans for moving various posts of command forward as the action progresses, and all the connections between different units and the similar units to the right and left, even the use of the various means of communication—the wireless, flash signals, rockets, telephones, buzzers, ground wireless and the runner posts. Then we get unit instructions for the exercise—all the rules of the game. Finally comes the time table of events—all of which we have to devise—such as artillery fire, machine gun fire,



Willard Straight, Henry L. Stimson, Grayson Murphy and Herbert Parsons at the Staff College

short barrage, delays on strong points, counter attacks, gas and the various things that might happen during combat. Notice of these events is given to commanders by the umpires who carry the time tables. The umpires, having given the information, then see whether the commanders give the proper orders. We have schedules of death traps—that is places through which as a man passes he becomes a casualty, because they are under fire. It's very complicated and very amusing."

May 27th, 1918 (to his wife): "The preparation of the A. E. F. for actual operations might have gone much faster. The picture might have been painted on broader lines from the start. But who knows but that if this had been done there might not have been trouble with our folk at home

who are apparently just waking up to what we're in for. I'm always reminded under circumstances such as these of my judgment of Sir Robert Hart. He could have done a lot more than he did, but I was never quite sure whether, had he tried, he would have lasted. His greatness may have lain in the fact that he accomplished anything and still held his job. We of ardent temperament are sometimes too prone to set a standard of the ideal, and then curse those who have done the possible because it fell short of what we know might have been accomplished. Things I'm sure, could have been better, but the wonder is that they are so good. We're all breaking up on Thursday—Grayson (Murphy) to his Division, the Colonel (Henry L. Stimson) to his Regiment, Herbert (Parsons) to a Division of the Third Corps as the G. 2 or Intelligence man. It seems sinful really. Herbert should be at G. H. Q. Grayson should be at Aviation or some other big constructive job, and I should be doing any number of different things that I know more about than I do about this game. But so it goes. They haven't learned yet at G. H. Q. how to use people. The Union (meaning the Regular Army) hates to let anything go. In the meantime we'll get splendid experience and I must say that personally, while I'll do anything I'm told and know I'm better fitted for other jobs than the soldier part, I'm delighted with my present task. This Liaison thing is untouched almost, and there's a chance to do something constructive and helpful and to make a bit of a name perhaps, incidentally."

By May 30th the work of the Staff College was over and Willard Straight accompanied General Bjornstadt to the headquarters of the 3rd Corps. He was assigned to the G. 3 section and was placed in charge of the whole problem

of Liaison. "Liaison," writes Mr. Herbert Parsons, "which means all ways of communicating orders and information from the Division Staff to the front line and back, is one of the most difficult problems in warfare. The army that has the best system of communication has a great advantage. It knows and knows instantly and can act accordingly. The army that does not know can only act unintelligently. Liaison included communication by telephone, wireless, runner, signalling, pigeon, aeroplane. It involved communication from the Division Headquarters to Brigade Headquarters, Regimental Headquarters, Battalion Headquarters and so on down to the out-posts, and also communication to the units on each flank and to the artillery. It sounds simple. In practice during battle it is a most difficult problem. There had been lectures in Liaison at the Staff College. There was a French booklet which had been translated for the American army. The difficulty was to give the best practice. Willard went at it fast and hard. He talked to American officers who knew or were supposed to know about it. He got hold of a young French officer who was supposed to be particularly well informed. He with other members of the 3rd Corps Staff prepared problems. A week before the Third Division was ordered under fire for the first time at Chateau Thierry, a problem in Liaison was worked out in practice in its training area, skeleton formations being used. The problem had been prepared by the 3rd Corps Staff and was attended by all of the members of the Staff College. So important was it that General Pershing himself came down to see how it worked out.

"The 3rd Corps did not long remain where it was first sent. In the course of a few weeks it was moved to Remire-

mont which was back of the Vosges and Alsace front. While the 3rd Corps was there Willard made expeditions to the front line. After one of them he was ill for several days. Some gas was lurking in a trench that he went through and he became slightly gassed. Always studying the question of Liason, he went up to the north to be with the marines of the 2nd Division in the Battle of Belleau Wood which he spent at a Regimental Headquarters.

"The results of the work which he did theoretically and practically, and of his observations of the plans and working out and breaking down of systems of Liaison led to a preparation by him of a memorandum which, except for a change on one mooted point, became the standard for the American Expeditionary Forces, and was issued as such by G. H. Q. He also received the great distinction for a reserve officer, of being asked to lecture at the third course of the Staff College on the subject of Liaison, which he did."

May 30th, 1918 (to his wife): "You should see me now! Phew! Nothing like it since Westbury. Here in a cunning little town on the Seine, where the Corps Headquarters are located in a delightful old country house. A great sweep of road leads up from the gate. There is a pond with rustic bridges, a great hall, old servants, stables, a tennis court, and in my room pad, blotter, ink and the pen I am writing with. It's the first time I've felt really respectable and of the great world since I landed. The old gentleman (he is 74) and a charming old lady are most delightful. They have five grandchildren in the war, the son-in-law in the diplomatic service in Russia, now in Vologda. It is really too delightful, but I've never felt more removed from war than this instant as I sit here and look out of my third story window over the tree tops and hear the locusts singing.

It's so lovely that I know that it won't be for long. The change from our old walled town is complete. There I felt as if I were in another world—school, war, history. Here I am back again feeling very much as if I had gone for a week-end with a friend, and expecting any minute to go and dress for dinner. Our headquarters are in a quaint old building with a gravelled court outside, evidently a chateau of the manor sort—by chateau I mean country house. That, too, is most charming, with the little canal just outside and the women washing clothes. But it's too far away, I know, and we'll never in the world stay here. It's too good to be true."

May 31st, 1918 (to his wife): "Today I've been out watching troops entrain. The roads are lined with marching men—dusty, tired, with lines of trucks, mules, wagons and all the baggage and muss of a column on the move. They're a rummy lot, our men. When they halt they scatter like ants looking for water. If the train stops they're all off, and when she starts there's a khaki cloud trying to catch up—jumping in, sitting in the doorways, swarming over the wagons or the flat cars. They're a great lot and I love it. I've been making notes and checking and criticizing all day and having a perfectly wonderful time. Yes, I love to be with troops. It's the greatest feeling in the world."

June 4th, 1918 (to his wife): "Here we are up near the line, not far from Chateau Thierry. The house is rocking and the windows rattling with gun fire, and the sky alight. I've been sitting at Headquarters, watching maps, learning that the Boche were concentrating about 12 kilometers away and hearing orders given to shell 'em by our old friend the beautiful military attaché at Peking. He's a darned good artillery officer—none better. We celebrated

our arrival here by having five Boche planes come overhead and watching the sky dotted with puffs as the anti-aircraft batteries opened up. All the morning, as we came up, the roads were lined with refugees going inland—their household goods in bundles—children and old women and old men—herds of cattle—flocks of sheep—scurrying before the tide of war. The roads full too of many troops, dusty and tired and straggling—not ours, French. Here our own Division is a joy; the Chief of Staff a wonder."

June 5th, 1918 (to his wife): "We've been in the lines again all morning and until the middle of the afternoon. The Division, and particularly our Brigade, is much set up because the French communiqué has announced that it stopped the Boche drive on Paris. It's a fact. After a number of changed orders they came in—by bus, by train, by march—and in 24 hours they had a Division thrown across the main road, and held. They shot up three different German Divisions that attacked them, and much to the surprise of the French, who never aim when they shoot (it's a fact) these men of ours, all of whom had had rifle practice, actually looked through their sights and everlastingly plastered our German friends. More than that, the artillery was accurate and played on the advancing columns like a hose and withered them. I stood this morning looking through a hole in a farm house roof. . . . We're moving out of this town tomorrow, for it's on the main road and the Boche is getting up his artillery, and will certainly plaster this place tomorrow or the next day. We've got a great lot of soldier men! I haven't any doubt but that they can take the Boche on at two to one for anything up to a Division. After that the Staff work tells the tale. But a Company went out this afternoon, captured a machine

gun and brought it back, leaving all the gun crew dead. Another outfit from one of our Divisions, just over from home, never heard a shot fired in anger, after 60 hours on the road, with their machine guns in Ford trucks, got into line and within three hours absolutely pulverized a Boche attack and saved Chateau Thierry. That's pretty good—72 hours on end—and sticking, holding bridges, like seasoned troops. The French Corps Commander was so tickled that he almost wept; and the poilus, who were beating it, rallied about this group of 'Yanks' and held fast."

June 9th, 1918 (to his wife). Hotel de Crillon, Paris: "Well, here we are again. Arrived here, at about four. We are off again for Corps Hdqs. early in the morning and are trying to get raincoats, try on uniforms, and all that in the one brief hour we'll get tomorrow—for there's nothing doing this afternoon, it being Sunday—*And*—Gracious, Goodness, Agnes! a bath in a tub—and plumbing, after four months of sponges, canvas tubs and the free born and open air conveniences of rural France! I have had the tub and revelled, and feel like a fighting cock. Tonight we're dining at La Rue and then doing the Casino de Paris! What do you think of that! And I've just made a cocktail in this grand apartment which was last night occupied by Sir Douglas Haig. Some class to us! It's really an extraordinary feeling to come here direct as we have. But of the two, I prefer what we left even in the first flush of excitement at being here. No, I don't really like it. I was scared all the time—scared to death—by airplanes overhead and noises of shells and thoughts of gas; but I would go through it again and again. I think one lives pretty keenly in those minutes—I guess that's it—and the sight of men, officers and soldiers, doing their jobs steadily is an inspiration.

It is fundamental living—eating to live, drinking to live, fighting to live. When you're up against that—fighting or going out and doing your job whether you go out or not, you know that you have cut away most of the fluff. That's why the fighting man or his type will win over the theorist and the conversationalist in the long run. It was an experience —this going for a week with a chance (not a great chance, but a chance) that you might go out at any time. Of course with a definite job and lots of work and responsibility it would be very much easier, but as a mere observer, taking notes and impressions, there was nothing save an occasional incident, for things move slowly, to take your mind off the fact that there was a sporting chance that you'd get killed. Under such circumstances I can assure you that imagination is a nuisance. Imagination was made for great leaders who sit and think and lead at the apex of the big triangle, not for the little ones that make the base."

June 11th, 1918 (to his wife). Headquarters 3rd Army Corps: "Here in a quaint old town in the Vosges, after a wonderful ride along the little feeders for the Savre—then up the valley from St. Loup and Plombières-les-Bains. It's a glorious country. So I hope we can stay put for a little time. This is a first rate place—plumbing and electric light! Quite unused to such luxury, I am. I've thought of a thousand things today to write you as I sped over the smooth roads, but I've been working on revising my Liaison dope in the light of my experience last week and am tired out. So goodnight."

June 14th (to his wife): "My Liaison dope has been approved and we're going to get the instructions out at once to our Divisions. Then I'll probably do a Liaison Manual for the whole A. E. F., or at least it looks that way.

Sketching in Normandy proved the diversion of a week's sick leave

My scheme is new and Bjornstadt thinks well of it. The head of the Training Section from G. H. Q. who was here today says go ahead. That'll be quite a feather in the cap of the young reserve officer! I've been working at the darned thing again tonight and have another briefer one to do tomorrow—so the first thing I know I'll become the Liaison expert! Rather ridiculous."

June 20th, 1918 (to his wife): "I had a long talk with the General (Wright) and with Bjornstadt on the subject and I am now making application to have my commission transferred from the A. G. Department to the Infantry. The next step will be to take a Battalion. This is the General's dope, and Bjornstadt's also. I'm quite sure they are right. I wasn't sure at first. I had some thought of going to the line on a promotion. But I think that wouldn't do as well. So, much as I dislike the idea, I'm going to make a try for it. The General says I can have a Battalion any time I want it in the old Division. That will please me a lot. It would mean three months during which time many things may happen. I know that I shall never be satisfied until I really get into it. Three months in the line will pretty nearly satisfy me and if I get through with that I'll be perfectly willing to go back again as a Staff Officer, even to G. H. Q.—the furthest away possible."

June 30th, 1918 (to his wife): "It's a town quite old, I guess, and most of it quite modern—as are all the little towns in the Valley of the Moselle—and over the mountains, where little streams tumble down to the Rhine, mill towns with cottages for labor and quite nice modern 'homes' for the proprietors with real plumbing and bath rooms. Here I have a nice white painted iron bed, with brass

knobs, wonderful linen, electric light and chintz at the windows. Quite a contrast to primitive Langres. Farther south in Alsace and over the mountains here in the land that was once Germany's the villages are, most of them, older with quaint half timbered houses and in the valleys, some mills. I must say that the population looks pretty German to me, and the old buildings too. The way the country folk, with their broad hats, make their hay in the meadow lands looks much more German than French. They are fair too—many of 'em."

July 1st, 1918 (to his wife): "Today, I've been keeping tight in my billet. This morning I didn't seem to have much pep, so I thought I'd best lay by and get over whatever it was. A gallant young sport, now a Lieutenant Colonel, by way of being the Corps Medical Officer, came or rather breezed in to see me. He held my wrists for an instant, looked me over and with rare prescience pronounced it 'three day fever'—a species of influenza prevalent just now. He prescribed aspirin and went on his way rejoicing. This afternoon he stopped by, and I went so far—great presumption on my part—to insist on telling him of certain symptoms that had impressed me as peculiar. He hadn't asked for any but I just had to bore him by telling him. 'Gas,' he said. Then I remembered that the other day in the trenches I had smelled some chlorine—thought it was chlorate of lime —and later some sort of sweetish stuff. There had been some gas shells in the neighborhood. The symptoms, secretions in the lungs, are apparently those of gas. That's much more heroic at any rate than trench fever or three day fever, or whatever it may be. But it would at least be interesting to know which it is."

July 5th, 1918 (to his wife): "I can't help having a feel-

ing that this show will end this autumn. I don't believe the Boche can keep it up, with our people pouring in as they are and showing up so darned well in every scrap. I believe they'll quit before snow flies. I may be all wrong but I can't see it otherwise."

July 21st, 1918 (to his wife): "Of course we are thinking and talking only of the Allied Offensive. It has gone marvelously well. The next week should see a lot of developments and I feel sure in my bones that before snow flies we shall have the war over. Mr von Kulhmann was right. Germany couldn't win a merely military victory. I hope she'll have no chance at any sort of a diplomatic one. I'm convinced that there's only one answer—that is a military decision which will make negotiation and trading unnecessary, but which will enable the Allies to tell the Boche exactly where they de-bus, as we say over here. The Allies should be just. They should have an eye to the future, but they should state what they will and what they won't do. With American troops pouring in that is what they will be able to do before long. You can't deal with the present outfit. Revolution in Germany of course would entirely change the situation. But I don't believe that will come. They are too well disciplined."

July 24th, 1918 (to his wife): "I am still working on the Magnum Opus, which is almost in final shape. In a day or two I think I shall be rid of it. It will be sent out to the Divisions and then I hope I can get on with something else. Apparently they assume that I am to remain with this Staff, and from what the General said last night I guess my chances for a Battalion are vanishing. The demand for even semi- or quarter-trained Staff Officers is so great that there will be no chance of a move to the line, I'm afraid. I

couldn't help telling him last night that I didn't want him to be influenced by his friendship for me, that I was ready, naturally, to do anything or everything that might be in the best interests of the service. The trouble is that I suppose we're all a bit ambitious and I'd like to get on and I'd like to get into the show. But there are lots of other people in the same situation. One is learning all the time, anyway. It's mostly a question of getting mentally adjusted. It isn't such a terribly complicated game, after all. But I'm getting a little tired of always being a subordinate. I'd like to have my own show. I'd like to get a crack at something nearer the line."

July 28th, 1918 (to his wife): "The old question, it is now, of the Battalion came up again today. It's really quite embarrassing and I am very much troubled in my mind—troubled because I can't see quite clearly what to do. The situation is this: the General says that if I want to go to one, I can do it. He points out, however, that if he sent me to one of the Divisions, the Commander would probably nab me forthwith and put me on Staff duty, because there are so few men with the Langres course available. The net result would be a shift from a Corps Staff under a General I like and with men whom I like to an unknown crowd with a Division. Advantage, so much nearer the game—disadvantage, as stated. In any case no Battalion. The Chief of Staff and my own immediate boss want me to stay. So does the General. Pointing out the situation as aforesaid they tell me to choose."

Grayson Murphy to Mrs. Murphy: "On the night of the thirty-first of July, I had a most delightful surprise. Dear old Willard Straight arrived and spent the night with me. It was wonderful to see him again. He is certainly one of

the finest characters and ablest men I have ever known. We could not have much of a talk, unfortunately, as I had to go out at night to liaison with the brigade on our right, and while he was with me it was so pitch dark and the road so hard to follow that we could do little but study our course. We got back very sleepy about two in the morning, and he left in the morning. It was such a treat, though, just to get in touch with him again. I hope things may work out so that we can get together again over here. He is in charge of some very important work—much more so, than mine—which has all so far been very interesting and instructive but quite inconsequential. Willard rather looks for peace this fall."

Aug. 2nd, 1918 (to his wife): "I must bring you up to date and fill in some chinks. Having to go to Langres to talk at the Staff College I asked for permission to go up to the battle front to check up some of my theories on Liaison. My plan is to have the Division Commanders assemble their Brigade and Regimental Commanders and then let me give 'em a talking to on what I learned in the hope that I can impress upon them the fact that Liaison, if effective, means the saving of lives. Just drive it home. I'm not much of a believer in this written order stuff. There's too much of it. This method of mine is something new and I think it will work. Then I have formed schemes for training for action against machine gun nests which caused most of our losses in this recent fighting. Here again I hope I can bring in an innovation or two in the way of training. We'll try it anyway.

"The experience of the past few days has really been wonderful. I shall never forget those pictures—the fields, with wasting crops, trampled by men and horses, littered

with abandoned shell piles, ammunition boxes, tracked by men and animals, torn by shell fire, great gaping holes with clumped earth scattered about, stones and roots torn and bared, woods with trees stripped and twisted and shattered, buildings everywhere in ruins, abandoned gardens, old dug-outs, bits of uniform, broken down motors, stripped of their useful parts by the salvage people, long stretches of wire, torn and tangled, German signs and names of former occupants on doors in chalk, woods where the bark had been chewed off by horses, abandoned gun positions. And all this was not only here and there, but for miles and miles—the whole desolate country side, torn and dishevelled and desolate, with trucks and men and wagons crowding the roads, going up, and the streams of ambulances carrying the wounded back, men bandaged, sitting, the feet of the lying cases sticking out under the blankets, four to a Ford, as they trundled by. Everyone cheerful and getting on with the war. They say we're not a military people. Maybe not, but we're awful good soldiers."

August 6th, 1918 (to his wife): "This is indeed a great war, and we are a great people! Were it not that the others, after four years' experience, are still floundering and muddling about, I should feel discouraged. Our own performance is bad enough, but compared to theirs it's a marvel, when I think of the stupidity, bull-headedness, narrow-mindedness and lack of foresight. All of which comes back inevitably to lives—the lives of simple men and the sorrow of simple women, because of the incompetence and idiocy of their leaders.

"And now having groused for an instant or two, I'm going to turn in. I'm very restless and discontented at the moment. I presume it's because I'm number fifteen or so

in the machine. I'm afraid I never like things much unless I'm running them and have some responsibility—not so much delegated but the topside stuff. However, that can't be. So we'll continue to go at it. I formally applied today for service with troops. I told General Wright to turn it down if he wanted to, but that makes my record clear anyway and puts it on an official basis. I didn't want anything furtive about it."

August 16th, 1918 (to his wife): "Your husband, Dorothy, is a crock, I'm afraid. Altogether a crock. I walked 6 kilometers yesterday in riding boots and blistered my heel, badly. About four this morning the darned thing started to hurt like blazes. I sent for a doctor who pronounced it infected. This rather gets my goat, as it puts me out of seeing a raid that is to be pulled off early tomorrow morning and where I had a fine reserved seat. The doctor tells me that despite my buxom appearance I must be run down or this darned heel would never have flared up as it did. He says my resistance is low, ten days' rest for mine. I'd rather been coming to that conclusion myself. I wouldn't take leave, but I've had a feeling for quite a while that although I could mote along perfectly well, I didn't have a whole lot of reserve to draw upon and that it would be well to recharge the batteries a bit. I suppose that really since October, or rather September last, I have been going pretty hard. I've been in the office or on the job every night till twelve almost, and in the end that wears on one, I guess. I hate to take it now just when I had my chance to do the Battalion, too, but if one is tired it's no time to go up in the line and get potted at even by this rather quiet M. Boche in this neck of the woods. A bit of shell or gas is just as effective even though it be intermittent, and recovery, if

hit, might be more difficult. So here's to a leave—or sick leave, it is, for I told the doctor I'd not go unless he ordered it. I think I'll take up Hermann Harjes and go with him to his villa somewhere on the coast. He's tired too, and we'll have a pleasant party in the sand and in the sun. Tomorrow or next day, I hope to get off. But oh! my Battalion —it seems always to flit away. This time I almost had it."

August 20th, 1918 (to his wife): "The more I am with our men, the more I know that I could reach their souls. But I know that I'll never really have the chance. This and many other things that one sees makes one sick at heart. All the opportunities, the great human opportunities, that are being lost daily, hourly for want of foresight. And I'll not get the chance because I haven't had military experience, forsooth. Experience with a company of 60 men in a Western post! That's the extent that most of 'em have had. Years in service, that's all. Most people don't realize that imagination gets you to the same place, and is better than experience in many cases. It's better because it's quicker; it's intellectual, and experience in most cases is an accumulation of lessons, gained from errors that imagination and sense might have avoided. Imagination is to foresee and mentally to construct what without imagination you have actually to go through with. But to people without imagination, it is anathema. They don't understand it and they distrust anyone who has it. Oh—if only I would get a chance! The War Risk job doesn't count, you see, because it went so smoothly when other things were going wrong, that they all thought it must have been a terribly easy job. To do a job is to give prima facie evidence, not that you are able but, that you had a cinch! Really, I don't care so much for promotion and recognition, save as it gives a chance to do things bigger

and better—or rather to do the bigger things better than they're being done. And we must all think of what's coming after this war—which isn't going to last so long, it seems to me—to help the men now, to know them and lead them, and by understanding them to be able to play a part when it's all over.

"Today, I sketched all day. Started out in the morning and made one. Then had luncheon and went back and did another. The war seems far away, though one thrills at the new French advance and Lassigny taken. I think that the end is coming. The Hun is beginning to squeal, and a few more punches and he will quit. It remains to see whether he will agree to an Allied peace now, or wait till he is forced to do it. My guess is that he'll quit. Without the Americans the war could not have been won. It will be hard for some of our friends to admit that, but they'll have to. I have a suspicion that it will make for great jealousy. Surely it will require circumspection, but I hope that some of our friends won't mix circumspection with blindly letting the other fellow put things over on us. We must be very careful. Tell Herbert (Croly) this, though I guess he knows it. There's been an awful lot of bunk talked on this side about the aims of this war, and it's up to us to force our Allies as well as the Boche into a really constructive, cards-on-the-table peace. Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay will not forget in a year the training of centuries, believe me! Nor will they surrender easily or gracefully."

August 23rd, 1918 (to his wife): "The sea air and sleep have done wonders. I begin to feel quite a different person, and I know I am much more sane and less querulous. The letters that have been written are going anyway, though sometimes I think of tearing 'em up. I can look back even

now and see that I, not only have been, but have given written evidence of being, a damned fool."

August 25th, 1918 (to his wife): "I'm sending you the sheaf of sketches—all but the portrait of Logie (Major Logan) which came out quite well. A little stiff and labored, for I am out of kilter on my eye work. I can't see as quickly or as surely as I should and the mechanics bother me. But in the sketches you'll see quite a marked and progressive improvement. The one of the old Manor House done today isn't bad really, and is infinitely better than the first attempt."

August 28th, 1918 (to his wife): "Well, it's a funny world. I guess that these days must have come for a purpose, to teach me as usual where I get off, though somehow I should think that there had been enough of that for a time anyway. This morning on going to the office I found orders directing me to proceed forthwith to the 1st Army, to report for duty to the G. 1 Section. Having done my best for a long time to avoid G. 1 it seemed rather hard. Also an Army is worse than a Corps, and the further you get away from the line the less chance you have of doing any work which will enable you to carry on. You will always be an assistant—never a boss. The bosses will always come from the men who have made good with the Divisions. The rest of us at higher headquarters will only be hewers of wood and carriers of water. As a matter of fact, I've played it badly from the start. I should have tried to go out as a Brigade Adjutant from Langres. That would have put me next to troops and given me the experience down below, which would have been invaluable. That was my original plan too. Then when I got myself transferred from the Third Corps in the hope of getting a Battalion, I missed the fight at Soissons and so no

Battalion, and had to start de novo with the 5th Corps. That done, off to the 1st Army or—General Wright having telegraphed to ask that I remain with him—I go to the 7th Corps as an assistant something or other, and there remain and probably miss another scrap. So it doesn't pay in this army game to monkey with one's fate. Then if things go wrong one has only one's self to blame. Otherwise one can blame someone else. Now I don't know whether General Wright's request will be granted or not. In a way I hope it won't. Yet having made G. 3 after all these trials I hate to go into G. 1, which is an administration and not a fighting job."

September 4th, 1918 (to his wife): I'm trying to work out a personnel system for the army. It's tremendously important and very complicated. No one knows yet just what the administrative relations with G. H. Q. will be. The army is such a new baby. The whole question of administration will have to be worked out. The trouble is that they go ahead in this, as in everything else, and plan for their organizations and have a lot of busy men shoot out a lot of half-baked orders, without having any one sit down and prepare a carefully studied project, and then submit the whole scheme in a bloc with all the orders and everything drafted and ready for issue when the time comes. There have been so many conflicting orders and counter orders that I know, as far as I am concerned, I rarely pay any attention to 'em. However, this is my job at present and I am writing memoranda suggesting schools for older men and clerks and all that. It seems rather footling when I'd so much rather be writing operations orders for a scrap."

September 10th, 1918 (to his wife). Headquarters First Army. "Everyone has been very tense here these last ten

days. Plans for our first all-American offensive have made a great stir. For our first attempt I should say it had gone pretty well. My only regret is that while all this has been going on I have been fooling with memoranda on personnel instead of working with a Division or Brigade and getting some of the actual combat experience that means everything. All my soldiering has been theory. The others are getting the real stuff, and by getting stale I am losing what facility I had. That's why I have been so sore all these days. Today I've been to see the Army Adjutant trying to work out some details of organization. There's been a lot of friction—quite unnecessary. Personalities don't mix—that's all. It's so easy really to get on with people if one only tries and doesn't want to grasp too much always."

September 26th, 1918 (to his wife): "Much has happened, since I last wrote. Poor Bennett has had his back broken in a motor accident. I hope it will turn out all right. I've seen the offensive start and Barber and I were sniped at and shelled at a little, and I've found that one should not press too hard if one wants one's desires in this world.

"First and second have worried and depressed me respectively, and this, combined with the fact that I've had no sleep, makes my morale very low this evening, so I'll write no more tonight."

September 27th, 1918 (to his wife): "The sun looked brighter this morning, but, believe me, it was dark last night. I'm glad that I'd the sense not to write. No sleep makes Jack an exceedingly unamiable boy. Poor Bennett worried me terribly, for I am devoted to him. He was very brave the night they brought him into the rough hospital, but in great pain. By the greatest good luck I found Harry Lyle—now

a Lt. Colonel—and a Lt. Col. Clinton, both of them splendid surgeons, and they looked him over. The photo taken the next day shows two of the lumbar vertebrae cracked, which is very serious. He was in a Ford, following me with some baggage. I had a Dodge, a French officer and more baggage. We went on and Bennett coming afterwards had a head-on collision. The other two came out of it all right but in some way the car landed on him. The news today was that he was so much better that he had been evacuated. The start of the offensive was thrilling I suppose, but I couldn't get my mind off Bennett. Barber and I were awakened at three. I had had a weird night. Brilliant moonlight in this strange little, grey little, mean little town that straggles up a bare hill side, where the Army Hdqs. are. I turned in for a rather hectic hour and a half, and first I shaved, I call that to your attention, so that on the morrow I might be bright and clean. For as you know I hate a bearded, stubbled face. Luckily I had brought with me some coffee in a thermos bottle and some cheese and stale bread and chocolate, so we had a nice little meal before we started. It was very chilly, but clear-cut—the stars overhead bright, the road a stretch of gleaming gray. The big guns had been pounding since about eleven. Flashes were dotted along the sky line—a sudden light and a glow, like heat lightning in the summer time. We reached a point just on the southern tip of the Argonne, where there is a little town clustering under a high hill that overlooks the whole valley. Here we left the motor, for the road up the hill side was steep and, as we discovered, cut by occasional shell holes. We reached the crest at about 4:30 and watched the fire. The plain was covered with mist. From where we stood we could see the whole sweep of the front—flash, flash, flash,

like a group of enormous and well spaced fireflies—and further in the distance, dimmer, the flash of the German guns. The fire became gradually more intense and then at 5:30 the barrage started. There was the continual roar from west to east—rolling, rolling—punctuated by the duller sound of the heavy guns. The rockets came up from the Boche lines, all along. The attack was on. Somewhere down in that sea of mist men were going over the top in long lines, and clambering over obstacles, cutting wire, sweating, cursing, struggling. Yet, but for that incessant roar it seemed so peaceful in the waning moonlight. Then the first tinge of dawn. The day came rapidly. The sky was grey and gold and green, then pink and salmon with mauve cloud banks and then blue and silver. Balloons in observation climbed up like huge beans dotted along the front. The airplanes soared overhead and went forward. Beneath us was the sea of mist still. A spire here, a row of trees there, a hill, the two walls of poplars along a highway with mist between and on either side two green gray banks for a milky stream. The trees of the Argonne were silhouetted against the soft damp cloud. All the time, that roar. It became brighter but the mist still clung in patches like a Japanese print.

"Finally at about six thirty we walked down from our perch behind some camouflage in the concrete top of an observatory and went into the shell wrecked town—wrecked by the constant shelling of four years of war. Here in a dirty and war-worn kitchen we found a dirtier French cook who had coffee on tap and we had a couple of glasses—very welcome, I assure you—and some jam and bread. I am not squeamish, but that kitchen was a sight. The yard was full of signs to be placed in the captured territory. News from the line was already good and trucks were loaded with

them ready to go forward. We then took the car and ran out toward the line, past a labor battalion going up for road repair in the captured territory to fill the shell holes in the roads. We passed the batteries of seventy-fives firing the barrage and went on with the engineers, who were already doing the, so to speak, scout and pioneer work—recovering barbed wire entanglements and clearing off the litter of obstruction. Next we went across our own front line and on into what three hours before had been no-man's land. The highway here was moss covered and full of weeds, but the road bed was fine. Then came the Boche wire with the fresh earth thrown up by our artillery. We climbed over the trenches and went on back through obstacle after obstacle, catching our coats, and stepping high. I should have hated to do it at night. Here too, the pioneers were already at work. A few wounded were coming back—men with their arms in slings—slightly wounded only, for the casualties seem to have been very light.

"Soon after we caught up with the troops going up in support. A bridge across the Aire, on the main highway from Clermont-en-Argonne to Varennes, had been partly blown up by the French I guess, long ago. We got across on a wooden bridge put in by the Boche, bearing three light railway tracks. We were standing talking with another officer who blew along about that time, when zing-zing, a couple of bullets struck at our feet. A sniper apparently left behind or spent bullets. We separated and went along and when Barber and I stopped again, once more a couple of shots, so it looked as if the first theory was correct. We were now on the outskirts of a little shell-torn town with a company of infantry just ahead of us. They took to cover and so did we. Then we watched them form into attack

groups, though I think the Boche was a good way off and the formation just there unnecessary. A gang of about twenty prisoners was brought in with one proud Yank driving them. The Boches were all smiles—damned glad to get out of it with whole skins, I should say. We walked back along the same road. More men were coming up and the Boche dropped a few shells in our vicinity—not so close, but he was after the road and it was unpleasant to be merely rubber-necking and loafing along. I don't mind 'em if I have a job but I should hate to be shot sight-seeing.

"Barber went on. I took another car and went back. I stopped and saw Bennett and then had some lunch. A hectic morning but I'll never forget that misty plain and the morning light and the roll of the barrage.

"At lunch I saw Colonel Grant—Deputy Chief of Staff, and a very fine fellow. He told me that he had hoped to fix it for me to get into the party and that Col. Drum, the Chief of Staff, had almost agreed to send me despite Barber's protest, when the pressure became too active. Apparently it came from all sides and made poor Drum sore. I don't blame him. I have really been almost frantic to be doing a clerk's work during this show and the last, to have no part in the real work of combat, and I have talked to my friends—a lot of 'em here. I told 'em the matter was in Grant's hands but I guess that they in the goodness of their hearts tried to press it anyway. Grant, I guess, was a little disgusted—perhaps that is not the right word, and Drum just said 'No.' So I was out of this. Luckily I saw something. But I didn't want to see, I wanted to do. So much for my pains. It's the old fault of pressing, I suppose—tennis, polo, everything. But I don't seem able to get over it. Probably never will. Grant was awfully nice in the way

he told me. But my heart sank within me. When I left this place yesterday, what with Bennett, no sleep and disappointment, I could have sold out very cheap. Yet it was really funny, after all. I don't know quite what to do next but if I see Colonel Drum I hope I can fix it myself."

October 4th, 1918 (to his wife): "They're attacking up in front again this morning. No reports have filtered back to us as yet, as to how it is going. But it's a mean damp day, low hanging clouds and raw, and it must be awful uncomfortable work. I'd change for it though in a minute. Really, I'm in a state, to be here, writing endorsements and telegrams as to whether so and so can be spared to go as such and such to this or that Division. There seems no way out of it at the moment however. You see I am being disciplined! It's not a question of putting people where they can do the best work and speeding up the whole show. It's a question of ignoring that and saying—'What! doesn't want to do what he's told. We'll fix him, wants to get out, does he? Ah, hah—he'll get out when *we're* damned good and ready. We'll show these fresh guys!' In the meantime I feel as if I should go frantic. Some day I may look back on this as a horrible nightmare, but it's night and morning, first and last, whenever there's an odd moment not filled with work. I want to get away so badly and hate this so, that I just squirm. Well, that's nothing to do with the price of figs in Arkansas, has it? What a funny world! Damn the war, but if it isn't the war it'll be something else. I guess there'll never be fun anywhere again—prohibition at home and taxes. What with all manner of highbrow problems, what is a poor cuss going to do anyway!"

October 8th, 1918 (to his wife): "I think that, take it all in all, if the war ends I'd like to go home at once and help Her-

bert on the N. R. The same situation that existed after the Civil War is coming up. Our own junkers are going to try and do some of the things that made so much bitterness then —the foolishness and intolerance of the North. Of course the South fought for an ideal. Their cause was much more just than the German. They were entitled to much more consideration than the Germans, but by and large it's all the same. If we're through, let's be through—and just. This is going to be a real fight and I want to help."

October 11th, 1918 (to his wife): "The war is finished anyway. Martin (Egan) thinks soon, but that Germany is not yet prepared to crawl. I disagree with him. I think Germany is finished now and that the reply to President Wilson will be a general crawl down and cessation of hostilities in no time. Personally I may be an ass but I wouldn't be surprised to see 'em quit within the week. They are licked and they know it, and the sooner they quit the less onerous will be the penalty. The comments telegraphed from some of the home papers make me tired. Lick 'em—What's the use of licking 'em any more if we get the peace we want. That's all that counts, but they don't seem to get it. They never will, I'm afraid. They give me a pain. Fortunately neither their views nor my pain matter much."

October 13th, 1918 (to his wife): "What I'm afraid of now is that the British and French may kick over the traces. They have tasted blood and may demand their pound of flesh. The jealousy in England of our increasing power is more manifest, I understand, all the time, and within five or six months I should not be surprised if there were bad blood between us. A strange situation might arise in which the war being won and we being no longer willing to fight, when we without power—for our military power is all

that has given us diplomatic power, not any magic touch or Divine word—are standing up for a fair deal with Germany —that is standing by our proposition which the Boche have accepted—while England and France demand more. It is going to be a cat fight. W. W. is not a leader—not for a minute. He's no more ready for peace than he was for war. The people have done everything, forced everything that has been done. He has merely made speeches—well written speeches at opportune moments. He has anticipated nothing and prepared for nothing that I can see. What's more, he's refused to let others do it. We stand in a fair way of having fought the war, lost thousands of lives and millions of dollars, upset everything, and of not getting the peace we started for, because he wouldn't have the kind of conference you speak of discussing that Sunday at Westbury. The trouble is that it should have been done when our Allies were much less cocky than now. They would have agreed to anything then. It will be difficult to line 'em up now."

October 14th, 1918 (to his wife): "The difficulty is going to be to get these people to agree to anything that is at all just, even under the circumstances. We have the largest force now and as long as the war lasts we must bear the brunt of the fighting and they will be quite willing to have us go on and get for them what they want. There are all manner of pretty political squabbles on the way. We should have made our bargain with the Allies when we first came in—or at least when we began to send troops in such large numbers. Now we will be apt to get nothing—not even the peace we fight for, but a peace which will, instead of being founded on a League of Nations, have the foundations for other wars."

October 18th, 1918 (to his wife): "Again after midnight.

This time doing a little late business in the office, all of little importance. General Penn of the Personnel Bureau just telephoned me that I have been ordered to G. H. Q. with a view to being sent to French G. H. Q. or to Foch, I don't know which. I knew that something like this would happen. Every time I stir a wheel to get into the scrap, I get further out of it. Next it will be the S. O. S. I suppose. I am heartbroken and disgusted. My only source of satisfaction is that if the war is going to end, the job will be very interesting. I shall, however, try to get out of it if I can."

October 20th, 1918 (to his wife): "You are so right in all you say about the state of mind of our own people at home. I think we talked about that one night, many months ago. I remember that then I suggested the simile of the team of draft horses that went along stolidly pulling their load and minding their own business. It takes a lot of noise and beating to get them into a trot—more still to put them into a run. Once they're running, they look neither to the right nor left. You can't stop 'em or turn 'em—they're too stupid and too lacking in subtlety. They'll have to run till they're exhausted or till they take a fall. That is the state of mind of our public. They've come in late to the war. They know it and they're trying to make up for their former indifference by their present intolerant chauvinism. Their first state, like their last, is due to lack of perception and cerebrating power.

"It's the people who are at home who are the fiercest about this war—the people who have seen none of it, who sit in their studies and rant. They want to kill all Germans, damn 'em. So do we, perhaps. What we want is to lick the Boche and get the peace we started into this war for. I

don't think the thinking soldier has much use for the jingo. War is far too serious a business. We have a job to do. We cannot and must not be diverted or deluded into not completing it. When it is completed we will all be thankful. I think many of us will have something to say to the loud-mouthed wild men who are now talking at home. I notice in your letters doubt about many things. I share them. No, we are not ready for peace. This great inter-Allied combination which should have been bound together indissolubly by the common danger has not been so bound. We are sowing seeds which will ripen into a harvest of jealousy and misunderstanding, once they have pushed their way through the soil of war."

October 25th, 1918 (to his wife): "Still here at G. H. Q. Sized the situation up and there seems no possible chance of getting out of this job, so I suppose I'd better go to it. Some people are lucky and some aren't. Many people I suppose would call me lucky. Maybe. Col. House reached Paris this morning, so that all things considered perhaps this is the place to go. Certainly when it's all over it will be much easier to get out and go home, if one is in a semi-independent job. So that's all to the good, isn't it. But think of the after-the-war problems. Phew! It staggers me."

October 29th, 1918 (to his wife). Headquarters Marshal Foch: "Here I am in a very nice country house on the outskirts of a well known village not far from Paris, having been introduced to the popots where eats the Staff of the Marshal, and duly installed there. Peace seems nearer and it ought to be interesting."

October 30th, 1918 (to his wife): "This afternoon the sun is streaming in through tall windows and I can see in the dis-

tance, through the green foliage, the slim spire that rises above the town—a needle pointing straight to heaven. Col. T. B.—my boss—is off at a conference. Elsie de Wolfe, in blue and white, just drove up in a Ford ambulance to invite us all to dinner tomorrow night chez Mme. la Baronne Henri de Rothchild. Truly these are the horrors of war. I am not quite sure of the lay of the land yet. The town is pretty, the living comfortable. Joe is turning into not only a humorous but an efficient servant. He is now adorned in a serge coat of Bennett's, which he found in Paris, a cap, which is not allowed, and a beautiful pair of boots which he bought yesterday. Bennett, incidentally, is coming on well. He should live, but may be paralyzed for months to come. These last days have been rather hectic. After being steadily on the job with no world to look at for months, it's really very confusing and discouraging to be plunged into Paris, with its whirl. Here it is quiet and peaceful and dull, I think. It's the sort of job that would be wonderful for a junior officer with diplomatic experience who knew his way about. Ten years ago I should have loved it. Now it's disheartening and heartbreaking. It's not a real man's job. There's no work to it; it's merely getting certain dope and being polite and persona grata. The Chief of the Mission may have responsibility but there's nothing for the rest of us, save a little clerical work. I think that I shall go wild if I have to stick at it for any length of time."

November 6th, 1918 (to his son, Whitney):

"My dear Bill:—

"This is your sixth Birthday. You're becoming a big boy now. In starting to school as you did last year and carrying on now, you are commencing on the road that you will follow always. This your birthday will be a day remembered

in history. The conditions of the Armistice after this great war, have reached Germany; and the German representatives have started, so the wireless tells us, to meet the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies to discuss their terms. They will accept them I have no doubt. They must; they are defeated. That should mean that there will be a new and better world; and there will be no more wars. You are going to have fights. I hope you will. Never fight a boy smaller than you are. Never let a bigger boy bully a little fellow. That's the sort of thing we have been fighting for in France. Remember too that as you grow older you'll think more and fight less with your fists; but you must always fight with all your heart and all your ability for the same thing that you fight for, when you are a boy, with your fists. There is just as much unselfishness and self-sacrifice and courage in going ahead steadily in every day life —and standing for what you know to be right—as there is in going over the top. There is less glory in it. It is less spectacular, and it is a thing of the heart and mind rather than of the animal side of your nature. Just remember this on your birthday, always. For as Beatrice was born on the day that war commenced, so the war comes to an end, really, on your birthday; and if this war is to be worth the great sacrifices that it has cost, you and I and all of us, must try to be worthy of the men who have died that we all might live, and we must live in the same fine spirit that has enabled them to make the supreme sacrifice. Just remember that.

Your loving

Father."

November 7th, 1918 (to his wife): "This morning at about 11:30 they telephoned from Hdqs. saying they had important news. Mathews and I walked down and were told that

last night the Boche had wirelessed that their delegation had left Berlin, giving their names—Erzberger included—and that they desired to see the Marshal. They are coming along the road, Chimay, La Capelle, Guise, and desired arrangements made to permit their passage through the lines. The Marshal replied that arrangements would be made. They replied that they were leaving Spa, the German Hdqs., at about noon and would require four hours to get to the line. We went to lunch where naturally there was great exultation. We had some extra good claret. They talked of the Boche coming hat in hand. The Belgian was particularly excited. They all felt that it meant the end. We came back from lunch and I called up Colonel House—first tried to get Gordon Auchincloss but finally reached the Colonel himself. I supposed, of course that he had had the dope and rather hesitated to give it to him. But he hadn't. He sounded very excited over the phone. I had to camouflage it, of course, and spoke of the visiting firemen hitting the line and said that I thought, though I was not sure, that the big cheese had gone to meet them and would find 'em sometime this afternoon—that Wurtzburger was coming along. He got it all right and asked me to keep him posted and also to come to lunch instead of at ten in the morning, which had been my previous appointment."

November 9th, 1918 (to his wife): "After a half morning in the office, I went in to Paris and first found Peter (Bowditch) at 78 Rue de Varennes where the Commander-in-Chief makes his Hdqs. I saw Peter for a few moments and then went on to lunch with Colonel House. He opened up by saying that almost the last person he had spoken to before leaving home was 'your dear wife'; and he spoke most

feelingly of you. He then went on about my being available, etc.—suggested that he had various niches any of which I might fit—etc., etc.—but he never knew, etc., etc. It was rather vague. He was awfully nice and sweet. Crosby of the Treasury, Mott, Auchincloss and myself, with Mrs. House and three lady friends at lunch. I told the Colonel that I hadn't been thinking much along political lines for quite a while and that if he wanted me to shift I'd better get busy and be attached to him at once. He did apparently."

November 11th, 1918 (to his wife): "This room in the Crillon has no decent lights; hence this letter will be brief. I turned in for a time after telephoning the Colonel, and then at eight was on the job again waiting for the text of the Armistice. It didn't come till almost eleven. So after telephoning in I beat it to town and saw the Colonel for a moment only. General Bliss came in and started to compare texts. I lunched with Martin and Eleanor (Egan) at Voisins and we drank your health. As I came into town the news was percolating through the villages. In the outskirts of Paris it was livelier. All afternoon the town has been on the loose. Groups of soldiers and sailors—all nations, officers, men, women—tight or nearly so, arm in arm, dancing, singing, yelling. There was no music save here and there a horn or two. The Americans were ubiquitous, leading all processions—Very funny—As I came back to the Hotel for dinner I passed in the Place de la Concorde, one gang of four, arm in arm, shouting 'Hail, hail, the gang's all here' at the top of their lungs. I dined again with Eleanor and Martin—this time at the Ritz. Perry Osborne turned up with a skate and a band he had collected somewhere and brought it into the dining room finally. We

The human interest of Normandy

all sang and it was quite gay. But I hate Paris and the Ritz and the rest of it, and wish to Heaven I were off somewhere with the men. This damned restaurant stuff galls me. Think what this day means to the world. I'm quite tired and therefore not on my toes, but it makes me serious and rather depressed when I think of the responsibility of being worthy to do what we must do."

November 12th, 1918 (to his wife): "Not much today. I've been terribly depressed—so much so that although in the full flush of enthusiasm yesterday Martin and Eleanor and I were to send you a cable about peace. I somehow haven't drafted it or sent it. I can't. In the first place, I feel that after a year and over in the army, I've ended in a fizzle. It is partly my own fault, perhaps, for not sticking originally with the 3rd Corps, though by leaving I finished the Liaison report; but it is partly through hard luck in being switched around, started by the original switch. I've never stuck to, and thoroughly done, anything. All my friends have kept to their knitting and had their promotion. Everyone thinks it's funny about me, and all say—'hard luck,' which gets my goat. So when I see these fellows coming back who've fought and done well, they're entitled to rejoice. They have a thrill. I've done my jobs as they came as well as I could, and there you are. So I'm not in the humor to cable or do anything. Our Day is coming, yes, but what do I take to you? A record of performance, something of which you can be proud? No—nothing. And now I stride out of the army to what everyone will think a soft job and my military career is over—trickling out.

"Today I've been buzzing about trying to arrange for accommodations for the Peace Mission when it comes. That, and arranging for a staff to handle motors and valet-

ing and all the details that will make for keeping them comfortable. I lunched with Dwight Morrow and Stevens of the Shipping Board, who have been doing wonderful work in trying to create really an international organization."

November 14th, 1918 (to his wife): "There's no news much today, or at least if there is I don't know about it. Things are rocky in Switzerland apparently. Bolshevism is spreading and a lot of our friends are not only getting worried but are planning measures which will make it worse, I should say.

"The big thing is You. Gordon Auchincloss told me that the Colonel had said he wanted you to come and for us to take a house and have little parties. Fine-o. I may be cross-grained but while I know you want to be of service and so do I, I don't want to be used in just that way, or to have you used thus. Perhaps I am unduly sensitive. It would be so wonderful to have you here and to have you bring the kids, and to have a house of our own. It may be a long, long pull, you know, and the kids are now at an age when they could get French. But somehow my hunch is all against it. To think of you being here is almost too much. To think of sharing this great experience is too wonderful. To have Bill have this memory is wonderful too. I hate to feel the way I do about it. It would give you such a change too. I can hardly bear not to cable at once—'Come.' Yet I can't see it. Now I'll sleep on it anyway."

November 15th, 1918 (to his wife): "Not much today. I'm beginning to think that letter writing may perhaps stop pretty soon and that you'll be on your way. I put it up to Davie (H. P. Davison) this morning to get his reaction. He thought you ought to come if the Colonel wanted it and that

the criticism was part of the game. I guess that's right. Then too I talked to the Colonel and he was very sweet. He told me of some of his plans and said he wanted you very much. He said you were one of the few people in America who saw the whole thing clearly and that you could be the greatest help in the world, if you could come over and be here, in smoothing out kinks. He was quite wonderful about you."

November 17th, 1918 (to his wife): "Are you coming?—that's all I'm thinking of. The day in the country—Rheims, Fismes, with the Colonel—not much talk really. Dinner very amusing with Joe Cotton, George Rublee and Dwight Morrow, George McFadden and Walter Lippmann. I hope we can start getting 'em all coordinated. And now bed."

Mrs. J. Borden Harriman to Mrs. Willard Straight. Hotel de Crillon, Tuesday November 26th, 1918: "Willard woke up Monday, November 18th with a chill and found later that his temperature was 101. He went to bed and has never been up since. Commander McLean, who came over as medical aide to the Mission, was looking after him—as also Col. House with the same trouble, the 'flu'; and all seemed going quite well until late Thursday night. Then *slight* symptoms of pneumonia developed in the left lung. Friday, as the pneumonia was more marked, Major Taylor and General Thayer were called in and confirmed McLean's diagnosis. It was thought to be a simple pneumonia until Sunday evening when the blood count showed that it was septic pneumonia, following grippe. The temperature hovered around 104 from the 19th on, but Willard didn't become delirious until Friday p. m. Since then he has been delirious continually."

Mrs. J. Borden Harriman to Mrs. Willard Straight. Hotel de Crillon, November 27th, 1918: "Last night after the cable was sent to you, Willard seemed worse, his temperature ran up to 104 again and his respiration was terribly labored, both of which was accounted for by the infection having spread to the other lung. He slept better, though, than the night before—more quietly, and this morning he is no worse, with the exception of more rapid breathing. Willard is a most wonderful patient, so gentle and tractable. He doesn't know how ill he is, or that he has anything more complicated than 'flu.' He thinks that he is at the front, and talks all the time about divisions, machine guns and the like."

He died during the early morning of December 1st. On December 2nd Mrs. Harriman wrote to his wife: "We tried to have everything exactly as you would want it, and never I am sure has a greater fight been made to save a man's life. The doctors say that in a hospital ward with the care that can be given there Willard would have gone five days before he did. Only one person in ten gets well with influenza pneumonia, and even up to a few hours before the end the doctors—all except McLean—insisted that Willard's splendid heart made it probable that he would be the one in ten."

From Charles Merz to Herbert Croly. Hotel de Crillon, Paris, December 3rd, 1918: "Messages from friends of Willard will have reached you before this letter of mine. But the end of our march today seems so completely what Mrs. Straight might have wanted it to be, that I shall write it for you again. It is simply the picture of that place she wanted Willard to rest in: 'With the American soldiers he loved so well,' her cable said.

"We had driven through the Bois de Boulogne, and then crossed the Seine and mounted a hill above the river. It was a low hill, and beneath the edge of its crest there lay a yard of white crosses. They looked down, not upon a place of complete stillness, but—as Willard would have wanted them to look—upon busy village streets of children and men and women. The yard itself was still, but always, I think there is the hum of people at work and play to come up from the valley and keep the hill from growing lonely.

"You could see, too, that the hill had its visits from the people themselves, as well as from their voices. For at each white cross there was a scattered bunch of flowers—flowers too differently chosen to come anywhere but straight from the hands of the village people. There was a French flag too, at each cross. The red and blue had faded almost into white. But the flowers, even on this December day, were fresh and with stiff backs, because they were newly picked. In fact, as we waited in the yard, there waited with us—flowers in their hands, and heads bared—an old Frenchman and his wife.

"All morning it had rained—a steady sort of rain. But at the very end there came a thing quite wonderful. As the bugler took his place at Willard's head, and the flag that sheltered him was lifted, through the clouds there burst the most friendly and glorious sunshine I have ever seen. It lasted only a moment. It was lost again, as the last note of the taps was sounded. But while the yard rang with the bugle's call, and you felt that the men beneath the white crosses were listening—it lasted. Then the slow rain came, and we left him—not alone, but in the care of the green hill, the old French people, and the hum of voices from the village just below."

At the grave of Major Willard Straight, Suresnes, Paris, December 3rd: Bishop Brent made the following address:

"In the Army when a comrade is taken, it is the common custom to speak of him in terms of farewell before his body is laid in its last resting place.

"In speaking of Willard D. Straight, I speak of one who lived a long life in a few years. His native gifts and varied experience equipped him to render distinguished service to the cause and country for which he spent his powers without stint. His organizing genius was exactly what the moment needed. We had thought of him as one of those destined and prepared to make a valuable contribution to the reconstruction of life in the new era that is at its dawn. But it has been ordered otherwise; and he has carried into a sphere beyond this world a personality which will operate there in building up the permanent order for which this world is the training school.

"It would be a lack of faith to think of him in terms of loss only. We shall surely miss the courtly presence of our comrade. But his disappearance from our midst does not mean that a superior force has conquered him. Death is powerless to defeat so knightly a man as he was. It has set him free to operate in wider fields, and the vitality which flowed from his well-directed efforts among men will forever course through the veins of his country. Even though it was not the hissing bullet or the angry steel that closed his eyes in death; even though it was not in the turmoil of battle that he died; he has none the less given himself in behalf of the common cause. He has done the greatest thing that God or man can do, he has laid down his life for his friends, than which there is no greater act of love or service.

"He strove in all he did to reach excellence, and far more than most men, he achieved his aim. Those who knew him intimately felt the force of his leadership. We had thought and planned to work by his side when we doffed the uniform and returned to the homeland. This may not be, nor shall we disguise our sense of loss, but we will not on that account lower our aim or decrease our effort. On the contrary, we will by added purpose and activity endeavor to make up what has been lost to us by his going, and like him, we will make excellence our watchword. This is our best tribute to our gifted and gallant comrade. With confidence that all is well, we now commit his body to mother earth and his soul to the high and loving God from Whom he came and to Whom he goes."

From George Bennett to Mrs. Willard Straight. Col. Blake's Hospital, Paris, December 1st: "It is with the greatest distress I write this, to offer you my sincere sympathy on the huge loss of the Major. "Oh, Madam, how could God take him! There were plenty of others who could have gone instead of him. Ever since we came to Paris last year the Major has not been really well—nothing serious, only a continuous run-down—and just like the Major he would never rest up long enough to really recover. When at Langres it was only the strict orders of the doctor there, Major Nichols, that he would stay away from the school for a few weeks, and after that he was fine till we got to Remiremont. Twice there I got the doctor for him when he was going on the car and the doctor forbade him to go. It was only after a lot of persuasion that he consented to go to Trouville. There he got a little better. If only he would have stayed there longer, it would have done him a lot of good. When we got to Ligny the Major was exceptionally

well. He didn't have the doctor once, and his leg didn't bother him at all. Everything went well, except the Major didn't care much for the work, and was always trying to get his Battalion, but for all that he seemed very cheerful and was always telling me of the plans he was forming when the war was all over. He had great trips planned for you to visit Langres and the different places he stayed at while over here. Everywhere he went everybody adored him, and especially the French people. The people he stayed with at Remiremont were some of the nicest persons, he said, he had ever met. They could not do enough for him. Madame Burgogne was always putting huge bouquets of flowers from their garden in his room. They were greatly distressed when he was ill there, did everything possible to add to his comfort; and all these places he had mapped out for you to visit. He helped scores of people in France; always the Major's idea was to make everybody happy. It pleased him more than anything to be of any assistance, didn't matter who it was as long as he could cheer them up —whether it was some surprise party for some officers at the mess, or giving things away to the different people around his billets. Always he took loads of cigarettes and tobacco with him when he went to the front. Anytime an officer might mention he hadn't a certain thing the Major would send me along with it. If any of the officers were sick, it was always he who would send along something from the mess. I think it's too cruel that one of God's best men should be called away like this. I don't think there can be in this wide world another man like him. And to lie here and reflect that I was denied these last few weeks with him, after all these years—and possibly when I think I might have prevented it. He wrote me the nicest letters

when I was at Col. Walker's hospital, and it was the thought to be near him in Paris where he had me transferred.

"The Major's funeral was today, and Mrs. Harriman told me the flowers were wonderful, and Miss Hoyt Wyborg kindly brought me a huge bunch of roses from the Major's funeral. Enclosed is one of them. If my wish were granted it would be to go with the Major. Please pardon, Madam, my expression. Only I know that he was the noblest that ever lived.

"Your obedient servant,

George Bennett."

Lt. Col. Grayson Murphy to Mrs. Willard Straight. Air Service Headquarters, London, December 5th, 1918.

"I never loved any other man as I loved Willard, for with the most splendid courage and high qualities of manhood he alone of all the men I have known combined the quick sympathy and sweetness of a woman. The months that I spent with him are infinitely precious. The inspiration of his faith can never leave me. I could not believe that he would be taken. He was so needed here. It was to me as unthinkable as Germany winning the war, a thing that God would not do. Where is there any other with his ability and energy, who will side as Willard would have done against the miseries and troubles that confront the world? He had the highest purpose, the most unselfish creed that I ever knew. It was with the heart of a true crusader that he faced life. He was so splendid in his attitude to the war. I do not think that anyone will ever fully know what he contributed to it. His first work here was invaluable and his development of the vital principles of liaison so essential to our combat troops, was adopted as practically the standard of our Divisions. I talked to him just after

the Armistice, of his work with Col. House, and his whole beautiful conception of the possibilities of a wise and righteous peace was such that I was sure he could not fail to have a deep influence in forcing the influence of America into the right channels. It was not only the feeling of personal grief, but the mournful thought of the loss to the country and the world of that brave and potent sword that could cut so terribly and so surely and was never sheathed, when noble swords are so needed and so few. I look back on so many beautiful little things: the kind acts to the unattractive and humble, the ready seizing of responsibility to right petty wrongs or punish what was wrong or mean, the sweet courtesy that warmed the hearts of so many strangers in our little house in Langres. How many men in many places sorrow for him, for no other reason but that they loved him!"

William Adams Delano to Mrs. Willard Straight. Hotel de Crillon, December 1st: "Nothing that has ever happened in my life has brought me such consciousness of the power of a great personality as Willard's death—the power of his ideals, of his sweetness, of his high mindednsss. Throughout the four days that I have been here everybody has contributed to that feeling, and as I have listened to the many words of love and affection which have been spoken by everyone who has come in I have wished that I might transcribe them all for you, for if there can be any consolation for you it must be in the knowledge that these same ideals and high purposes will be carried on in the hearts of all who knew him well."

Same to same. Hotel de Crillon (later): "If you could only have heard, as I did, all the wonderful things said at that time about Willard, by his men, his friends and his inferior and superior officers, it would have made your heart

happy. I don't think I have ever known any one who had so many friends in every class,—so much beloved by all."

From Mr. Walter Lippmann to Mrs. Willard Straight. Paris. December 1st, 1918: "In the last eight weeks I was closer to Willard than ever before. Up at the First Army we talked far into the night, hoping, planning, sometimes doubting, but in the end renewed. In that personal loneliness which is the background of so many of us here, there was mixed also a fear that what we had meant, and what alone could justify it all, was not the meaning and the justification to those who will decide.

"Willard came to the work of the Peace Commission with that thought in his mind, and went at the work with the grim sense that it could not fail because boys who had died were of the faith. Willard was passionately interested in the technique of war; never did he lose his sense that the substance of the war was a host of boys who had to go and were told to believe."

From Walter Lippmann to Mrs. Willard Straight. Paris. December (later): "I wish that you might have my own sense of Willard at the peak of his hope and courage and fineness. He had been through the furnace and the swamp, but his eye was never so clear, and in the classic meaning of religion he had bound himself to high and unselfish purposes. The vulgarity of war he detested gallantly, and the artist in him—to me the youngest part of his soul—was so exuberant with plans and the good fight.

"He had his doubts, as you know, and in the matter he was engaged in, they were searching, and sometimes fierce. But they rose out of a deeper confidence than I had ever before seen in him, in what men could do if they tried and were unafraid."

CHAPTER XVI

AN INTERPRETATION

THE foregoing extracts from the letters which Willard wrote to his wife during his year in France are, I think, a scrupulously candid and complete revelation of the effect which the plunge into the iridescent yet opaque waters of the European war had upon the mind of one sensitive and eager American. They enable us to trace the course and explore the contents of his mind during a period of intense and prolonged pressure which tested to the limit his moral cohesion, his practical abilities, his intellectual insight, the scope of his sympathies and the whole fundamental tendency of his spirit as both nature and education had formed it.

His career in the army was from his own point of view far from being a success. The day after the armistice was signed he characterized it as a "fizzle," and a fizzle it was if judged by the tests which he himself applied. He received, indeed, a formal recognition after his death by the authorities for distinguished service, but this recognition was so frequently granted to American soldiers in France that the distinction taken by itself classified him with the many who were called rather than the few who were chosen. He was not promoted, although most of his associates who started from the same line as himself received this much more substantial credit. He was denied the chance of doing the work which he longed to do and which he was far more competent to do than thousands of more favored officers. It was a war;

and he wished to fight. He wished to fight at the head of a small unit, a battalion, which he could command and care for and lead and with whose members he could share the tedium and the discomforts of the trenches and the excitement and danger of battle. But his superiors insisted on his sticking to desk work which he did well but detested. The great conflagration was extinguished before they released him from his swivel chair and permitted him to enjoy the modest and not unnatural ambition of sharing in the fight. He was utterly and bitterly chagrined. The chagrin probably had something to do with his death. His physical vitality was prodigious, and if he had not been run down, his body might well have thrown off the influenza before it developed into pneumonia. He was run down quite as much as the result of being baffled as of being overworked.

He attributed the ill-success of his career in the army at different times to different causes—to a lack of specific equipment, to mismanagement of his opportunities and at times to permanent infirmities of disposition. Probably he did mismanage his opportunities to some extent. If he wanted a battalion he certainly made an initial mistake in enlisting in the staff. The trouble was, of course, that until he reached France he did not know how much he wanted a battalion. After he did know he tried too hard to get it. He brought so much pressure to bear on his immediate superiors that they were irritated rather than persuaded. He would have fared better if he had cared less and waited more patiently for a better opening. His very effort contributed to the opposition which thwarted his will. He recognized the bond between his overmanagement and his failure to get what he wanted, and in his depressed moments he considered it one more illustration of a permanent tendency

on his part to press. Such a tendency did exist. He was nearly always impatient to reach some specific goal, and he often jumped at too many short cuts in trying to overcome the intervening distance and obstacles. He could be patient with other people but not with the journey from one stopping place to another in his own life. His impatience and his desire for quick results counted against him more in the army than it had in civil life.

But these letters, even if they reveal his career in the army as a failure according to his own standards, also reveal it as a generous, gallant, faithful and even noble failure. And the failure itself, bitter as it was to him, was merely circumstantial. He did not fail to accomplish any specific task which was assigned to him. On the contrary, the two important jobs which came his way—that is, the initial administration in France and England of the War Risk Insurance Act and the preparation of the Liaison Manual—he performed according to all testimony supremely well. He graduated from the Staff College somewhere near the head of an unusually able class. Insofar as he failed, he failed not in performance but in the opportunity to obtain the more congenial and thrilling work which he wanted; and this failure and his own contribution to it impaired the credit which he might have received for his substantial successes. He sacrificed his career as a staff officer to a mismanaged attempt to command a battalion of fighting troops.

The significance which attaches to such a failure depends on the nature of the motives which prompted him to work so hard for a transfer from the staff to the line. But Willard's motives were peculiarly honorable to him. He came to feel more and more that the man who did not actually fight with, as it were, his own hands was accepting a second

rate relationship to the realities of the war. Such a man would not as a result of his own experience know what war really meant. Willard could not contemplate such a default. His heart beat strong enough and his wings were broad enough to fly as high as he could see. He missed his perch upon the tree because he was exhausted and disconcerted by an unnecessary failure to reach the crag on the mountain top.

By the crag on the mountain top I do not mean high command. I mean a foothold in the army which would have enabled him to attain as a matter of personal experience all that was most real and most human in a soldier's life. It was characteristic of Willard that when he embarked on any adventure he proposed to live into it and through it as completely as he knew how. Unless an officer commands a body of soldiers and shares their hardships, grievances, perils and companionship, he misses the unique and intimate aspect of war. The members of the staff of any army are doubtless from the point of view of organization and generalship at the centre of things, but from the point of view of individual human experience and fulfillment they are on the outer margin.

Willard did not propose to spend his time and use his ingenuity in planning dangers and sufferings for other men which he himself never shared. He first began to feel this way when he went to the front line trenches on February 21st, 1918 and heard the story of the Chief of Staff who accompanied the troops of his own division on a raid planned by himself. The next day he writes "I don't like it very much, but I guess it is up to me." That was why he later asked for an assignment to G. 3, the operating division of the staff rather than G. 1. He was, as he said,

"scared to death," but he could not see himself part of a fighting body without himself sharing the fight. Scared as he was he "would go through it again and again." "One lives pretty purely in those moments." "It is fundamental living, eating to live, drinking to live, fighting to live." And then he "loves to be with the troops. It's the greatest feeling in the world." "It all comes back to lives—the lives of simple men, the sorrows of simple women." "The more I'm with the men, the more I know I could reach their souls." So the war became for him a primitive human occupation which he would only falsify by sitting safely in an office and making mistakes which cost other men their lives. As Walter Lippmann said in a letter to Dorothy Straight, "Willard saw with lucid clarity the human cost of practical decisions. In G. 3 he did not move paper regiments across a map, but sons and lovers and glorious boys across mud and wire and filth against other boys."

He never obtained a chance to live a soldier's life with his brother soldiers and prove his ability to lead them in their fighting, to look after them in their discomforts, to share with them their sufferings and their dangers. And he would in these respects, if the chance had come his way, have been a superb soldier. He would have transformed his command into a fellowship-in-arms which would have lived under his contagious example an exhilarating common life. He never had his chance, and so from his own point of view his career in the army was a "fizzle." But it was a failure only because he sacrificed external success to a desire to enrich his own spirit with the most human experience that a soldier's life had to offer. It was his insatiable imagination which prevented him from "sticking to his knitting" and so defeated his ambitions, but it was this same imagina-

tion which made him, depressed and chagrined though he was, more than ever lovable and admirable in his failure.

It was not the first time. Again and again he had thrown up his knitting and started off on some apparently unnecessary and imprudent quest. He was a man whose imaginative energy needed many outlets—so many and so varied that he sometimes seemed to be the victim of novel and occasional excitements and to lack continuity of purpose. Neither before nor after he became a soldier did he focus his attention on any specific professional occupation; and on several occasions he had deliberately discarded opportunities of professionalizing his work. He himself had moments in which this restlessness which accounted for a lack of professional training seemed to him at once a serious fault and a fatal handicap: "I've always been finding myself," he writes to his wife from France on June 30th, 1918, "in places more important than I was really competent to fill. I've never had the foundations for my own jobs—except, perhaps, the political foundation for the Chinese loan business and for my work in the State Department. I tried to do architecture by clever drawing instead of hard study. In the Customs service I merely started. I was an amateur correspondent and an amateur consul. When I took on the Group, I was not a banker. Then when I started soldiering, instead of beginning as I should at the bottom in the training camps, I deluded myself into thinking that my administrative experience would be more valuable to the Government in the Adjutant General's department than would my service as a real soldier in the line. Always I have been too hasty and anxious to hit the high spots. I couldn't rise because I didn't have the fundamentals. In later years I think no one worked harder than I, but I have

always been trying to catch up on things which I ought to have known instinctively."

There is an amount of truth in this indictment of his adventurous, experimental and thirsty disposition towards life which it would be stupid to ignore. In his impatient desire to pluck the ripe apple from the tree and in his instinctive preference for the novel and exciting occupation, he behaved as the temperamental explorer and pioneer has always behaved. The pioneer cannot avoid being an amateur and the jack-of-all-trades. He would not be a successful pioneer unless he sacrificed specific training to flexibility and initiative. When he was only twenty-two he wrote of himself: "Had I only peace of mind, I could make a good artist out of myself." But if we dropped the criticism at this point, we would do him a manifest injustice. For although he never patiently mastered any one medium of expression, either in business, in the professions or in the arts, he turned his own default to the utmost and the highest account. He lacked some of the virtues of the trained specialist and some of the authority which can come only from special proficiency. Yet he was even more successful in steering clear of the imaginative poverty, the contracted sympathies and the over valuation of professional competence which is characteristic of so many experts; and in avoiding what he avoided and in seeking what he sought he was more loyal to his own genius than he himself recognized.

Back of his versatility, his love of novelty, and his refusal to specialize in any business, profession or art there was no fundamental instability. Quite the contrary. From the beginning to the end of his life his behavior was the answer to a clear and a continuous calling. The schools do

not as yet teach the young how to practice this particular vocation, but it is one of the most pregnant which free men and women can adopt. He was called to make his experience of life vivid and whole. He never stuck to his knitting, but if he did not allow himself to be fascinated and captured by one vehicle or method of expression it was because his imagination was never satisfied for long with the limitations of one kind of experience. He had no sooner explored one domain than it lost interest for him and he pushed on to another. "He was," as his sister, Hazel Sanborn, says, "continually painting on a mental canvas infinitely larger than anything which could be mastered by daily or yearly achievement." "I do not think," she adds, "that any ambition he ever fulfilled brought him the satisfaction of an accomplishment completed, for the achievement instantly became part of a larger scheme." The larger scheme consisted of the whole vivid movement of his life.

One of his oldest friends, Mr. J. O. P. Bland, places a radically different interpretation on Willard Straight's personality. He saw the clue to Willard's temperament not in any impulse towards wholeness of experience but in its dualism. He says: "The dual personality which exists in most of us was very clearly marked in Willard Straight. During the fourteen years of our close friendship, most of which were spent in the Far East, I came to know and to appreciate both sides of this personality and to watch with ever increasing interest their conflict and its effect upon the steady development of his character. The Willard that I and others knew, first as a junior in the Chinese Customs Service and then as Reuter's correspondent during the Russo-Japanese War, lingers in one's memory like sunlight on the distant hills. In those days, when all the world lay

before his eager feet full of the prospect of romance and high emprise, when the heyday was in the blood and every turn of the road meant fresh chances of adventure, Straight was an artist, a knight errant, a Bohemian in the best sense of the word, a Peter Pan embodiment of light-hearted *joie de vivre*. He had all the artist's susceptibility to environment and atmosphere, with swift alternating moods of exaltation and introspective melancholy; beauty of form and color, music and the moving pageant of Oriental life were the very breath of his nostrils.

"But even in those days, when his romantic and artistic personality was at its liveliest and best, there was always latent perhaps but never dormant that other side of him which surprised some of us at first, the keen and alert, practical and ambitious personality which made itself felt as a very live wire in the subsequent stages of his career. This side of the man, so difficult for the superficial observer to reconcile with the genial dilettantism of the artist, was one which could not long be content (as so many foreigners in China are content), with inglorious Capuan ease. For him there were always new worlds to conquer; it was not in his nature to consent to be 'lonely, forgotten in Gaul,' he was typically American in his keenness to be in the movement and to 'make history.' "

Obviously this dual aspect existed in Willard Straight, and obviously there was at times a conflict between the idealist and the man of affairs, between the Bohemian and the man of the world, between his native independent and self-assertive disposition and his craving for sympathy, for success and for approval. But although the dualism existed, he never consented to it. He steadily, gallantly and often successfully tried to overcome it. His characteristic mo-

ments were not those in which he was the victim of the conflict, but those in which he was its master.

During the years of positive achievement in China from 1907 to 1912, he was not a man of affairs who was hampered by impractical ideals and artistic sensibilities. Neither was he an imaginative enthusiast who fumed and groaned under the necessity of building his palaces on treacherous soil and out of ugly and inferior materials. His personal contribution to American policy in China consisted of a specific program which, as he believed, embodied a national ideal in a more available form. Although he had moments of hesitation and doubt, he was never so completely himself as when he was inventing expedients, conducting negotiations, dictating explanatory memoranda and in other ways overcoming the obstacles in the realization of his plan. Intense and complete self-expression meant for him the trying out in the world of a concrete program which embodied a national or social ideal and the refashioning of that program until it was adjusted to its surroundings and confirmed by sufficient consent. An unusual combination of native gifts and pertinent experience qualified him for work of this kind. He could believe loyally in an idea. He could lay out a program which really mediated between an idea and the world in which it had to live. He was alive to the need of adaptations in his program which would repair its original defects and he was fertile in devising happy expedients to that end. He was an unusually competent negotiator. He knew his own mind and the sources of weakness and strength in his own position. He was both firm and conciliatory, frank and adroit. He could understand and sympathize with his opponents. He was sometimes irritated by what seemed to be unnecessary and stupid opposition, but

he was rarely disconcerted. He was cool, clear-headed and self-possessed under fire. He earned the confidence of the men with whom he was dealing and converted the negotiation, so far as possible, into common counsel for the achievement of a common object.

So far then from being a man divided against himself he was at his best a stabilized and composed human being. He possessed the kind of stability which could only come from the existence of an adjustable balance between will and intelligence, and he owed this balance, insofar as it was adjustable, at least in part, to the formative influence of his mother during his early childhood. It is the aim of enlightened education to give to the positive impulses through which the energy of a particular temperament is discharged, free, lively and proficient yet at the same time considerate expression. Emma Straight understood this aim, believed in it, and applied it to her son. Her son turned out to be the kind of a man she sought to form. How much her weaving contributed to his moral fabric, we cannot certainly say, but possibly and even probably she contributed a good deal.

If it is an accident that Willard Straight turned out to be the man he was, after having received from his mother during the first five years the education he did, it is one of those accidents which we are not obliged to believe was an accident. Although the evidence of the fulfillment in the man of something which the mother designed in the child is inconclusive, it possesses one considerable merit. The different parts of the evidence may be, if taken alone, unsatisfactory, but if taken all together they conspire to tell a much more persuasive story. A mother, herself a professional teacher and a courageous, imaginative and deeply

affectionate woman, gave the most and best of her time for many years to the building up of the personality of her son by stimulating him to act on his impulses, but to adjust their expression to his social and physical environment. She awakened in him a sense of the need of such adjustment partly by drawing his attention to the consequences of his acts on other lives and partly by frankly appealing to his affections. This educational experiment became for the time being the most thrilling and significant thing in her life, and she was moved to record its progress in her diary. Her diary was an obvious fore-runner of the educational case-books which record or graphically represent the responses which the pupils in the more advanced schools of today return to their educational opportunities and trials.

Circumstances, however, prevented the mother from seeing the experiment through. The boy grew up under conditions which began in Japan by encouraging the unruly expression of his impulses and ended in Oswego by denying them a sufficient expression. Yet as soon as he started to live his own career, he exhibited an impulsive and adventurous disposition which was at the same time affectionate, laborious, sensitive, sympathetic and amenable. Although he was not a boy with specifically intellectual interests, he continued the biographical record of his life which his mother had begun. He sedulously recorded the facts and explained the meaning of his conduct for the benefit of those people to whom at the moment he wanted to speak. He developed into a man with sufficient initiative and imagination to create new and glittering treasures of experience and with sufficient objectivity articulately to interpret for himself and others the meaning of what he was doing. Surely his mother had something to do with the balance of

initiative with considerateness, of integrity with versatility and of will with intelligence. The only question is how far her influence on him was transmitted by heredity and how far by education.

Education seems to me more important than heredity for a reason to which I have frequently called attention, and that reason is the salient part which expression played in his personal economy. His inveterate habit of supplementing action with expression is, I think, a key which unlocks many obscure chapels in his mind. It was by being honestly communicative that he carried on the education which his mother had begun. It was by being articulate that he pulled himself together. He was more interested in the whole of life than he was in any of its phases. He was never satisfied unless he was moving in the direction of an ever completer fulfillment of his temperament and this dissatisfaction was the cause of his unrest. He could not stop at any one stage and allow himself to be classified as an artist, a man of letters, a diplomat, a business man, or a staff officer. Life meant to him action—action which was vividly realized, which was purposively directed, whose significance was rendered articulate, and which after being articulated was transformed and yielded to the next adventure. The articulation bound it together and in part redeemed its constant movement and his own frequent complaints at the cost to himself of his thirst for more experience.

The opportunity never came his way of showing what he could really do in action—particularly in the kind of action which brings with it the leadership of other men. He never occupied an important executive position, and, unless I am very much mistaken, it is as an executive that he would not only have worked most successfully but have provided his

temperament with its completest release. He craved heavy responsibilities. And if they had come they would have stimulated him to make the best of them and of himself. He would have functioned most happily as the chief of some large organization—an American Relief Association or a department of state—whose purpose he warmly approved, whose successful management demanded exact realistic and prophetic thought as well as prompt and courageous decisions, whose policy needed not only to be adjusted to the facts but explained and justified to public opinion and whose staff he could inspire with some of his own generosity, enthusiasm, disinterestedness and loyalty.

But, of course, this is a speculation which only those who knew Willard well would have reason to believe. His life ended before his career vindicated the abilities which his friends attributed to him, and it is in a different direction that we must look for his memorable efflorescence. Large as his career loomed on the horizon of his mind and keenly as he desired to transact large affairs and to modify the course of events in his own world, he was not chiefly interested in the external results of his actions. He was engaged fundamentally in the more intimate and personal business of living in obedience to his consciousness of the real values of life. He was engaged in satisfying his thirst for vividness and wholeness of experience. That engagement would probably have kept him restless and thirsty until the end of a much longer life, if such a life had been granted to him. He could only have satisfied it by means of an imaginative sublimation which was essentially religious and whose medium of expression would have had to square itself with the forms of traditional religion. But he was too thoroughly and admirably a man of the world to seek his

own consummate expression in an affirmation of religious truth. His imagination was not interested in the vicarious compensation for the poverty and conflicts of experience which was what religion meant to him. It called him to action rather than to contemplation. The beginning for him meant the deed rather than the word, and this in spite of the fact that after the explosion of the deed he always invoked the word to prevent the explosion from having sounded in vain.

But because he was thoroughly and admirably a man of the world, he found an enormous satisfaction in passing through and pulling together the various phases of his vivid experience of life. While this satisfaction was never sufficient to induce him to pause and preoccupy himself long enough with any phase to become a master of its ways and means, he was nevertheless a master in his own way. Life itself was to him, if not a religious, at least an artistic exercise. "He seemed," wrote Walter Lippmann to Dorothy Straight soon after his death "to strangers the ideal man of action. I don't think of him that way. The final way in which he saw the world was the way the artist sees it as a sight delicious and exhilarating apart from anything anyone does or says or thinks about it. He combined with perfect sophistication about the way things are done that blessed innocence of the eye as to what they are. And the enormous fertility of his practical suggestion was, I believe, a phase merely of a playful and free fancy that carried all things easily." This comment seems to me essentially true and most enlightening. Willard was not at bottom an artist and he did not have the kind of imagination which belongs to an artist. The artist uses his imagination as an alternative to experience and as a compensation for its inevitable

deficiencies. Willard used his imagination as an ante-room or better a prompt-book to experience; that is why he was a man of action who began with the deed. But nonetheless he saw the world after the manner of some artists as something delicious and exhilarating in itself. He was an artist, that is, in the way he lived. He was always seeking to enhance the value of his own life to himself by putting form into it.

This desire to live in a formally presentable manner pervaded his attitude towards the smaller as well as the larger things of life. As his sister Mrs. Sanborn says: "Whatever came to him, whether in the way of a prank, an idea for a picture, or the proper way to dress, had a fine distinction which was sometimes misunderstood as mere contrariness. This showed even as a very little child, when he could not be persuaded to wear anything which had the slightest appearance of being soiled. Later he became fastidious in the extreme. It became a matter of lively irritation if he could not wear a tie of appropriate color, or if his suit did not appear to the best advantage. The anguish caused by the delay in achieving long trousers was probably as great as any of his boyhood. His feeling for the fitness of things and the value of social sanctions made many small discrepancies, trivial in themselves, seem of immense importance." And this feeling for the fitness of things extended, of course, to all his surroundings. It always was of great importance to him how and where he lived; and he always required that the scale and appearance of his residence should be commensurate with his own sense of the dignity of his work. The adventures of his life would have lost much of their zest for him if they could not have taken place in appropriate and interesting surroundings. He could hardly have suc-

ceeded in signing his first contract with the Manchurian administration if he had not created for himself out of the temple compound in Mukden a home which was at once an embassy, a club, and a frontier mansion whose inhabitants dressed for dinner every night.

Yet there was nothing histrionic about his preoccupation with the appearance, and the fitness of his life. His intense and inveterate interest in its shape and form was saved from any tendency towards a performance in a looking-glass in part by the entire sincerity of his personal projects and in part by a deeper and even surer touchstone of truth. He could see himself as others saw him. His insight into what was going on in the minds of other people prevented him from designing the form of his life to suit his own weaknesses.

His imagination was, as I have said, an approach to action rather than to representation or expression, but the actions which it prompted were not merely passages in his running attempt to get projects accomplished in the world. They were more often deeds of kindliness, affection or love which enhanced the values of his own life and those of other people. When he was twenty-four years old he wrote in his diary after meeting Richard Harding and Cecil Davis: "they have taken me in and I worship and revere and love." Words such as these would seem insincere if they came from a less objective man and extravagant if they were not vindicated by the whole tenor of his behavior. His life is most of all a fabric spun by his affections and woven into a pattern of lively and devoted personal friendships. It was the warmth of his heart, the vivacity of his sympathies and his desire for loyal and even intense companionship which consummates the moral vista of his life. The art

of which he was really a master was the art of making friendship and love creative for himself and for others. He could *impart* vitality, goodwill and understanding. He did not keep the gift for his friends alone. When he died even his wife was surprised at the volume of letters, amounting to considerably over a thousand, from men and women who were moved by his death to express a feeling of personal loss. Many of them came from people whom she did not know—people whom he had met once or twice but in whom during some chance encounter his vivid and communicative personality had aroused something of correspondence in them. What he did for these strangers once and in a small but still memorable way he did unscrupulously and all the time for his intimates. He was at his best as a knight who delighted to provide feasts, to sing songs, to break spears and to undertake dangerous and disagreeable expeditions in the service of those he loved. His life expanded, flowered, crystallized into form and culminated in this service.

"Willard," writes his wife, "had a genius for friendship. He went out naturally to people, with no self-consciousness and no disturbing inhibitions. He drew his friends from every walk of life. They ranged from 'Turkey' the expressman in Oswego who could never call him anything but Willard, to the clerks, taxi-drivers, postmen, steamer-stewards and men of all races and kinds. I remember giving my name in a shop one day and having the sales girl exclaim with astonishment—'Oh, are you Mrs. Willard Straight? My husband knows your husband very well.' And her husband was a policeman somewhere in New York.

"With his intimate friends he shared his enthusiasms and interests and found pleasure and stimulus in their companionship. He loved the exchange of thought that those

contacts brought him, and with his friends he was always gay, always full of eager interest, and abounding humor. Often I have seen him handle a trying human situation by merely recounting a funny anecdote or laughing away a disagreeably challenging remark. With him a humorous answer often served to turn away wrath. And his advice to me in my moments of exasperation and defeat was always this—'Don't get tense; don't let things come to the straining point; don't distrust the other man's motive. Laugh with him and things will come out all right.' His own ability to reconcile conflicting points of view was due to his innate belief in the value of bringing people together, and when they were together, of revealing them to each other as human beings who could understand and enjoy even one another's differences. I have personally seen wonders accomplished in this way, both in China, where at moments there seemed no common ground on which to meet, and again in New York where men of different aims and pursuits were brought together for the first time through him. With a genius for making things 'go,' he never failed to establish in this way a new basis for human cooperation and understanding.

"In his ardor to serve his friends he often sacrificed himself. One of them has written of him thus: 'He was ambitious more for his friends than for himself and he would turn aside from personal ambition every moment of the day if he could see any opportunity of being kind or useful to a friend.' I wondered often how he contrived to think of the things which he did for people. It was often some totally unexpected bit of kindness or attention, something that would never have entered my own mind. He was always busy finding people jobs, writing letters of recommendation, and extending an active hand of friendship. Above all he

was always accessible for advice or counsel. He delighted in making presents to his friends, cigar and cigarette cases and little gifts of commemoration. They always served to seal the good times he had had.

"People have said that he had the intuitions of a woman. His judgments of men were keen and acute. He could detect insincerity at once and it was the thing he hated most. He always instinctively reacted against a fakir, against anything that seemed to him untrue. He admired the men who had mental honesty and conviction even though he might not agree with them. And he was generous in proportions even greater than seventy times seven. With no taint of jealousy in his nature he was able to rejoice spontaneously in the success of other men. When people deliberately worked injury to him he never retaliated by any bitterness. I have seen him go out of his way to show kindly attentions to a man whom he knew had hurt him, doing it merely because it seemed right and fair, and because he couldn't bear to hurt anybody himself."

Willard's genius for friendship was not merely an impulse to be kind and generous and to share with others the good things of which he could dispose. It was composed of many elements and was wrought out of the stuff of experience and sacrifice as well as native inclination. Inherent in it was a gradually acquired habit of bestowing both in his thinking and in his behavior a lively and indestructible reality upon the personality of his friends. His imagination was sympathetic as well as constructive. He could divine what it was which gave the lives of his friends value to themselves; and he was eager to do what he could to assist in the release of these values.

A perfect illustration of the disinterestedness and the

gallantry which he could bring to the service of friendship is that of his relation with the editorial board of the New Republic. No man could either have entered into such a relation or lived up to it unless he were able to take personal satisfaction in the liberation and the expression which he could give to the lives of other people to whom he was attached. Every man on the staff of the New Republic owed to Willard Straight the opportunity to make more of himself under exceptionally favorable conditions; and he owed it to self denial as well as goodwill and generosity on the part of his benefactor. Willard never participated with sufficient intimacy in the writing and editing of the New Republic to feel that it was to any great extent an outlet for his own personality. It was at times irksome for him to be so closely associated with a publication and so responsible for its existence without himself contributing more positively to its policy and contents and frequently without altogether approving of what those contents were. It was the more awkward and irksome because his behavior was bound to be misunderstood. Many of his own friends whose approval he valued misinterpreted and undervalued the disinterested loyalty which moved him to lend indispensable support to a man and a group in publishing a journal which could not do its work without behaving sometimes in an unruly way and without disregarding to a certain extent personal beliefs. A man to whom generosity and loyalty in friendship was not an ultimate value in life could not have done it.

The illustration is so decisive that I am going to quote the version of it which one of the editors of the New Republic gave to Dorothy Straight after Willard's death. When the New Republic started, Philip Littell was scepti-

cal about its survival. He did not see how a man of Willard's "energy and will and decision of character," whose "convictions were obviously so strong" could remain true to the spirit of his arrangement with the staff of the journal during "the coming and inevitable differences of opinion." "No one knows better than you," he writes, "how utterly mistaken this forecast was. I mention it because I want to tell you that realizing the extent of my mistake, and getting to know Willard better and seeing his relation to Herbert and the rest of us through different hours, has changed my notions of human nature. Never had I suspected that one man could unite such fighting force with such deep-seated tolerance. Several times, as in the case of—— and President Wilson's re-election Willard put up the stiffest kind of a fight for his own side, but always, immediately after the battle, I had a sense of the imaginativeness and sportsmanship with which he accepted, as if it were a matter of course, the terms of the arrangement that he made with us. This lesson in toleration, this proof that toleration and great energy and determination can live together is something I shall never forget."

What Willard Straight did for his friends in the office of the New Republic he did more or less and in many different ways for hundreds, yes thousands of other people. His spirit fulfilled itself in individual human relationships in the realization of which he brought something in the nature of a religious devotion. And in this respect his attachment to his wife belongs in a class by itself. I have already quoted from the letter which he wrote to his son Whitney on the night before he sailed for France as an indication of what he conceived a mother might do for a son or be to him and consequently as a possible signal of what his own

mother did for him. But when he wrote this letter he was, of course, thinking of his wife; and in writing what he did about her for the eyes of his son, he was expressing at this solemn moment for the benefit of those to whom the knowledge would mean most the value to him of the one consummate experience and relationship of his life.

"My dear Bill," he starts. "You may never see this letter. I hope you never will. But should anything happen to me, I want you to have a word—you as the oldest—that you may have it for yourself and your blithe young sister and your brother Michael. My father died when I was seven years old, and I had no word save such as my mother gave me. She was taken, too, before I knew what she meant. I trust for your sake, and the sake of all three of you, your mother will be there to guide you. All the best in you comes from her, all the finest in you will be brought out by her. You are blessed as no other children have been blessed in your mother. May your worship for her—for it will be with you as it is with me, reverence and real worship—guide you and lead you to treat all women with chivalry. Save yourself and tell Michael to save himself, that you may go clean and unashamed to her who will be your wife and the mother some day of your children. Many good men don't. They may laugh at you, but they will respect you, and the respect of your fellows is worth more than their applause. Sometimes you'll get both.

"You are a fine honest lad. Be honest. Be honest and frank and generous even if others tell you you are quixotic. It is better to be quixotic than the opposite. Here again be like your mother.

"Be gentle and strong. Defend those who are weak. Understand and sympathize with those who are less fortu-

nate than you are. But do not let those who may try to do so mistake your gentleness for weakness. Fight if you must and if you fight, fight hard and fight fair.

"Make up your own mind, but respect the opinion of others. Don't think a thing right or wrong because some one tells you so. Think it out yourself guided by the advice of those whom you respect.

"Watch your mother; help her; comfort her. Don't let her tire herself out. Watch over your sister; protect her.

"Hold your head high, and keep your mind open. You can always learn. God bless you.

"Your Father."

This letter speaks for Willard Straight so perfectly and so finally that nothing remains to be said, nothing except the answer of the woman about whom he was confessing. "To me personally," his wife writes, "he gave everything in giving himself. He taught me to love the color and beauty of the world. He taught me in my own limited way, to think and act independently and courageously. He opened the real treasure house of life for me. The love that he gave was, indeed, a sort of veneration, a veneration which at times, quite contrary to his intention, completely humbled me before him. It was so utterly generous, so big, so inclusive that I could only marvel before it and question my own power of receiving. But just because he taught me to see life with new eyes, just because he liberated my spirit and brought me life and the abundance of it, now that he has gone I cannot feel that the joy and meaning of existence have gone too. Had he given me less I should find myself less equipped to meet life without him now. But having

given me everything, I can still feel that life is the adventure that he revealed, the quest for reality that he enjoyed, the great creative enterprise in which he vigorously and gallantly participated. Though much of the beauty has gone the vision and the purpose still remain."

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